



Interpretation and Education Program Business Plan

Helping People Enjoy, Care About,
and Care for National Parks

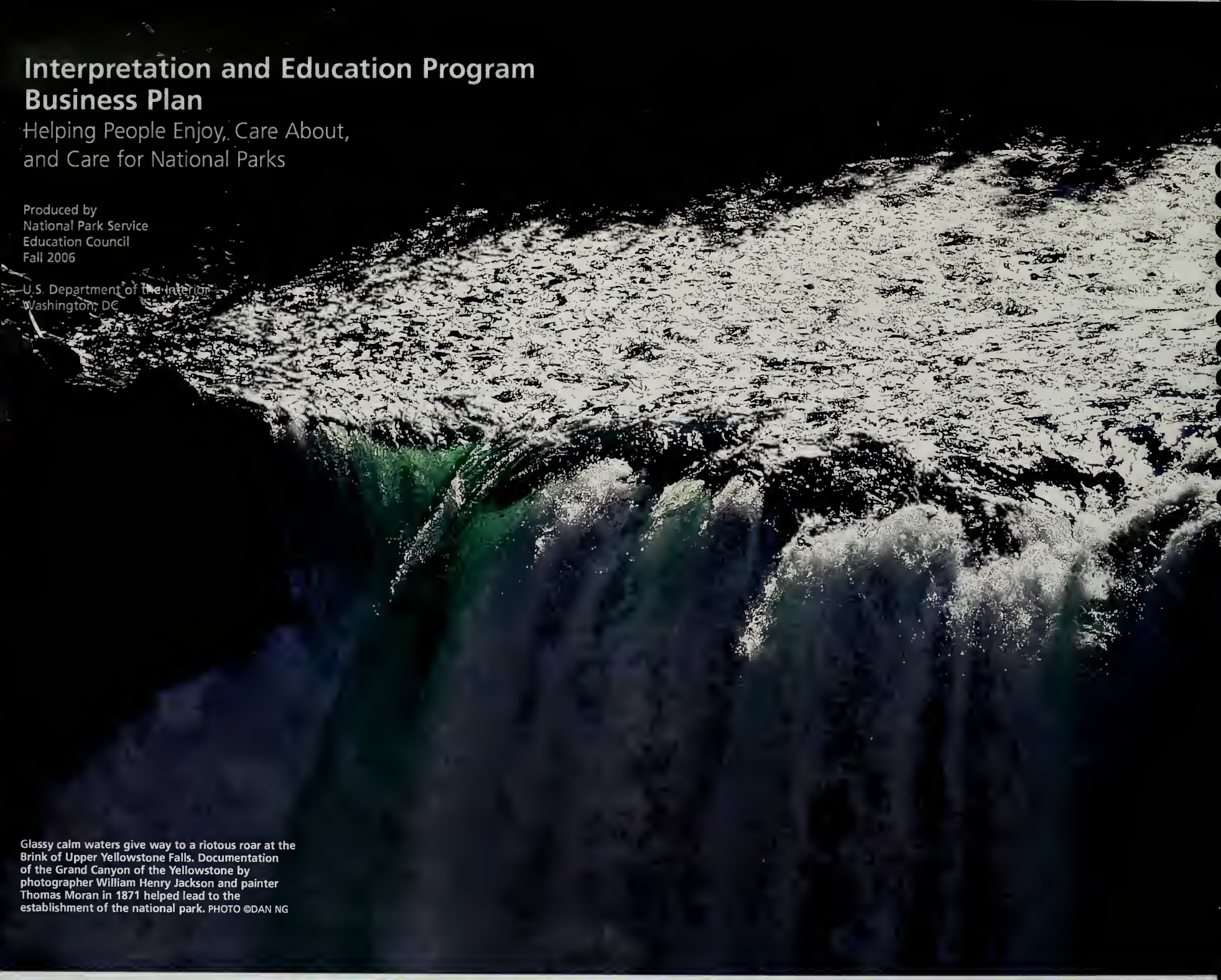


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Helping People Enjoy, Care About,
and Care for National Parks

Produced by
National Park Service
Education Council
Fall 2006

U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC



Glassy calm waters give way to a riotous roar at the
Brink of Upper Yellowstone Falls. Documentation
of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone by
photographer William Henry Jackson and painter
Thomas Moran in 1871 helped lead to the
establishment of the national park. PHOTO ©DAN NG



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Hunting for Arches

The National Park Service is pleased to present you with the opportunity to research individual arches by location, name, size, finder, and many more interesting facts! This program was produced in cooperation with the Natural Arch and Bridge Society and Arches National Park.

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This database was made possible by generous donation of information compiled by Doug Travers, one of the most dedicated arch hunters we know. He willingly gave the data and his programs to you, the visiting public, because of his enthusiasm for the subject. Stone Canyon Media granted permission to Doug and to the National Park Service to use their information. Look in the bookstore for a CD database you can take home.

If this computer shows the blue Microsoft desktop, please notify the ranger at the information desk. Thanks!

The new visitor center at Arches National Park features faux rock fins, interactive computer programs, and a film developed in partnership with the National Park Foundation and Discovery Communications—all state-of-the-art interpretive elements that help visitors enjoy educational and meaningful park experiences. NPS PHOTO

Introduction

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

—William Butler Yeats

Interpretation & Education Program Business Plan Objectives

- 1. Provide an overview of the I&E Program and a synopsis of its funding history.*
 - 2. Present a picture of current I&E Program operations.*
 - 3. Identify I&E Program priorities and strategies and establish a framework of investments that will invigorate and strengthen interpretation and education programs Servicewide.*
-

The purpose of business planning in the National Park Service is to improve the ability of parks, regional offices, and Servicewide programs to communicate more clearly their financial status with principal stakeholders. A business plan answers these types of questions: What is the business of the program? How much money does the program need to operate within appropriate standards? What would be the best financial investments to improve the program in the future? This business plan articulates the National Park Service (NPS) responsibilities, operational standards, and financial outlook for the national Interpretation and Education (I&E) Program.

Similar to individual national park business plans, the intent of this document is to provide NPS managers and field staff, Department of Interior officials, members of Congress, park partners, educators, and the public an insight into three main program areas. First, it provides an overview of the I&E Program and a synopsis of its funding history. Second, it presents a picture of the current I&E Program operations. Third, it identifies I&E Program priorities and strategies and establishes a framework of investments that will invigorate and strengthen interpretation and education programs Servicewide. This document is *not* an action plan. The identified priorities and strategies provide initial steps for investing in a larger vision. Analysis in this document is used in the *FY 2007–2008 Interpretation and Education Action Plan: Laying the Groundwork for Change*. The Action Plan specifies the first steps required for attaining that vision and for maintaining and strengthening NPS relevance in the twenty-first century.

This business plan represents the first time the agency has conducted a business-based examination of a national, Servicewide program. Addressing the broad scope of the program and recent developments in national NPS I&E activities proved challenging. For much of the history of NPS Interpretation, the national I&E Program was implemented by park rangers. However, the numbers and types of interpretive service providers in parks have greatly expanded since 1980. The NPS I&E Program is now delivered by park rangers, interpretive media, and volunteers and park partners such as field science institutes, museum operators, guide services, cooperating associations, contractors, and concessioners. This business plan focuses on park-based I&E Program activities.

Obtaining data to perform credible analysis based on business standards also proved challenging, since no systematic collection of program and media evaluation data occurs to assess outcomes of the I&E Program nationally. Similarly, significant gaps exist in the quantitative information collected annually. This business plan provides immediate recommendations for improving data collection, as well as a strategy for obtaining evaluation information to facilitate financial and program decision-making.

The National Park Service provides numerous opportunities to engage learners outside the national parks. “Teaching with Historic Places” uses properties listed on the NPS National Register of Historic Places to help teachers bring historic places into the classroom. The *WebRangers* Internet site involves students of all ages in NPS mission-based distance learning activities. These newer programs and activities are essential parts of the NPS I&E Program, but are not included in the scope of this business plan because of insufficient data for a thorough analysis. As a comprehensive understanding of the Servicewide I&E Program and relevant data evolves, a more complete analysis of park-based activities and other national programs will be critical.

Common methodology applied in developing individual national park business plans was adjusted to address the requirements of a business plan for a Servicewide program. A diverse team of field practitioners, executive managers, and business plan consultants organized I&E Program activities into five functional areas (Management and Administration, Facilities, Personal Services, Interpretive Media and Technology, and Partnerships.) These five areas describe all interpretation and education business for which the NPS is responsible at the park level. In addition, a survey of all national park interpretive and education programs was conducted in 2005 to obtain accurate data for the plan analyses (*see Appendix B*). This information is referred to as “the survey.” Metrics used in this plan are developed from guidance derived from best program practices, NPS policies, and directives related to education and interpretation. As a result, this document not only communicates the fiscal and operational resources and needs of park-based interpretation and education Servicewide; it recommends targeted investment priorities and strategies and provides operational baseline knowledge for future decision-making.

With changing population, demographics, and technology, it is clear that our approach to interpretation and education must also change if we are to continue engaging the American public with their natural and cultural heritage.

—NPS Director Mary A. Bomar



Director's Foreword

American democracy empowers us to build, transform, and renew our communities. Democracy enabled the establishment of our National Park System to preserve, unimpaired, the natural gifts of this continent, places that enshrine our nation's enduring principles, and places that remind us of the tremendous sacrifices Americans have made on behalf of those principles. Our national parks are every American's birthright and our nation's legacy for future generations. They are the most remarkable collection of places in America for recreation and learning.

The Interpretation and Education Program is essential to the relevance of the National Park System in the twenty-first century, and is a core function of the National Park Service. It is the means by which we communicate key messages to the public about the NPS mission and legacy, ensuring that our national parks remain vital and relevant in the hearts and minds of all Americans.

This business plan marks a milestone in the National Park Service tradition of educational excellence that dates back to 1920. Since that time, interpreters, naturalists, historians, and scientists have developed creative and effective ways to help people experience the rich learning environments of national parks. Through their efforts, visitors can immerse themselves in places where events actually happened, experience the thrill of connecting with real objects used by previous generations, and enjoy some of the most beautiful and historic places in America.

During my National Park Service career, I have witnessed the excitement of discovery in the eyes of young visitors to our parks. Across our great nation, interpretive rangers provide interpretation and education services for park visitors every day, while our exhibits, films, publications, and electronic media invite everyone to explore park stories and meanings. We work to provide balanced, accurate, and relevant information about the treasured resources, objects, and places that are integral to our national heritage with a dedication and spirit of stewardship that encourages emotional and intellectual connections to our national parks.

While the mission of the National Park Service remains the same, the way we go about achieving that mission has evolved greatly as we near our centennial in 2016. As passionate stewards of our natural and cultural heritage, it makes sense to gather and look to the future—a new day that dawns for our Service and for education. The NPS Education Council took on the challenge of *Renewing Our Education Mission* and I

was proud to be a part of that team. We addressed the challenges and opportunities for interpretation and education in the twenty-first century through sound, realistic, business practices. The Education Council created a steering group to accomplish the task and collaborated with the Student Conservation Association to develop this report—a *Business Plan for Interpretation and Education*.

We are proud of our work in the parks. We also recognize that demographic and technological trends are changing rapidly. We want to achieve an appropriate balance between actual park experiences and new technologies that might expand those experiences. We want to make our visitor centers as informative and cost-effective as possible. We want our employees to have the best training so they may provide excellent customer service and exceptional programs and activities. With assistance from volunteers and partners who help deliver NPS interpretation and education programs, we must better provide the public easy access to a variety of enriching experiences.

To meet these challenges and maintain excellent programs, we must evaluate our programs and media, and base fiscal and programmatic decisions on accurate information about techniques and services appropriate for our audiences. It is also critical that we diversify our funding sources and further develop a culture of philanthropy for our national parks. The priorities and strategies described in this plan will enable us to embrace these changes and challenges, and make informed programming choices using good business practices, to better serve all Americans.

This business plan uses data collected from throughout the NPS on all aspects of the Servicewide Interpretation and Education Program. We are proud of the last 85 years of interpretation and education programming and the process of developing this plan has indicated where we might even do better. We intend to follow up and make those improvements. We are dedicated to the American people who love their parks and expect us to preserve them for their future enjoyment and learning. We can do no less.



Mary A. Bomar, Director
National Park Service



Interpreters dressed in period clothing offer living history demonstrations that captivate the attention of students and teachers at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. NPS PHOTO

Executive Summary

The world is but a canvas to the imagination.

—Henry David Thoreau

This Interpretation and Education Business Plan presents data and analysis, describes challenges, successes, and shortfalls, articulates existing standards, and provides strategies and priorities that should be used for future decision-making and subsequent actions. The *FY 2007–2008 Interpretation and Education Action Plan: Laying the Groundwork for Change* is grounded in the findings presented in this document and should be read as an extension of the information presented here.

This business plan is primarily a Servicewide survey of park-based personal service interpretation and education programs. This is because little reliable data exists comprehensively describing interpretive media, the tremendous contributions of volunteers, concessions, and other partners, or other office and program-based efforts such as “Teaching With Historic Places” or the *WebRangers* Internet site. This plan identifies the need to gather and integrate such data. The data and analysis presented here is mostly derived from Fiscal Years 1999–2004 and is intended to both establish a baseline reference as well as provide a starting point for revising future data gathering. This plan also recognizes the historic role of Harpers Ferry Center as the keeper of interpretive media standards and production values. It is critical that the strategies and priorities presented here are considered and, where appropriate, are integrated with similar data and analysis of interpretive media and other interpretation and education efforts.

This plan identifies shortfalls affecting interpretation and education. Between Fiscal Years 1999 and 2004, the cost of employing a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) interpretation and education position rose 19.8 percent. This increased FTE cost, over the same period, outpaced the inflation-adjusted Operation of the National Park Service (ONPS) budget growth of 16.9 percent. Between FY 1999 and FY 2004 the I&E Program, experienced a loss of 205 FTE Servicewide. Much of this reduction occurred through the loss of temporary and seasonal positions, affecting public access to interpretation and education rangers at peak seasons. While permanent and temporary positions were reduced, lower graded public contact positions increased. Many interpreters, educators, managers, and

leaders are concerned the professional standards and expertise of ranger interpreters and educators are being threatened. This business plan recognizes that professional ranger interpreters and educators are important to the ongoing success of the Interpretation and Education Program and the agency's ability to provide for visitor enjoyment.

Five functional areas are described in Current Park Operations (see page 29): Management and Administration, Facilities, Personal Services, Interpretive Media and Technology, and Partnerships. Each functional area presents appropriate interpretation and education activities, challenges, and standards. All articulated standards were identified from policies, Director's Orders, and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals. A 2005 park survey was used to conduct a gap analysis indicating the Servicewide proficiency in meeting those standards. The results of that analysis are presented—most often as a shortfall.

Finally, this plan offers a series of priorities and strategies as next best steps to create better value for the public and parks through wise investment. These recommendations can help create greater efficiencies and effectiveness in the Servicewide Interpretation and Education Program:

- Create I&E core function statements and operating standards.
- Commit to staffing levels that support core function and operating standards.
- Develop a more effective and comprehensive inventory of I&E practitioners and data collection system.
- Leverage partnership relationships.
- Add Volunteer Coordinators.
- Create a distance learning platform.
- Simplify the Peer Review Certification Program and require certification of NPS employees.
- Evaluate I&E Program Effectiveness.
- Study National Park Service audiences.
- Create I&E Technology Strategy.
- Upgrade interpretive media.
- Sustain and enhance an informed leadership.
- Fund interpretive planning.
- Embrace efforts to create a culture of philanthropy.

Interactive exhibits at Everglades National Park provide opportunities for discovery as well as orientation and safety information. NPS PHOTO



Program Overview

Visitor survey data consistently show that the public values the presence of uniformed park rangers when they visit their national parks.

NPS has a solid history of serving visitors. This is demonstrated with consistently high visitor satisfaction ratings, such as 95 percent of visitors reporting a good or very good experience last year.

—2005 Office of Management and Budget Program Assessment Rating Tool

Interpretation and Education services became core to the National Park Service mission when Director Stephen T. Mather asked Dr. Loye Holmes Miller to offer a “Nature Guide Service” in Yosemite National Park in 1920. In FY 2004, 3,924 permanent and seasonal interpreters provided 604,928 program opportunities to 148,304,519 visitors. Interpretive park rangers, with their in-depth subject matter knowledge, their understanding of park-specific audiences, and their captivating ability to communicate, are able to respond quickly and appropriately to the changing interests, understandings, and demands of the U.S. citizenry and international visitors. Rangers also collaborate with professional educators, school systems, and other organizations to develop and present programs that support curriculum and learning objectives. Interpretation and education achieves the NPS mission through the trust the public confers on park rangers. National parks represent a multitude of complex topics, stories, and perspectives. As a servant of democracy, the National Park Service provides the public with understanding and appreciation of park themes and subjects.

Nonpersonal media, publications, films, exhibits, signs, and websites also provide visitors access to understanding and appreciation. More than half of park visitors use a variety of nonpersonal interpretive media to enhance their park experience. Interpretive media products are integral to I&E as they provide constant service, appeal to multiple learning styles, and allow for individual privacy and choice. New wireless technology can provide interpretation to previously underrepresented audiences (youth) on their own personal devices. Media such as park and trail brochures receive the highest importance rating of any interpretive service. All parks use and depend on interpretive media to present interpretation and orientation and enhance the experiences of park visitors.

Partner groups share a trust in the knowledge, authority, quality, and fairness of National Park Service educational programming. Interpretation and education services embrace partnerships with school systems, scouting groups, religious communities, and other

learning institutions that desire in-park learning experiences. Place-based learning serves both the curricula established by partners and the mission of the National Park Service by connecting learners to parks.

The I&E Program is also greatly enhanced by volunteers and partners. In fact, visitors are more likely to interact with volunteers and partners than park rangers. Significant potential exists to increase I&E effectiveness by investing in such relationships. However, limited data are available describing the scope of non-employee contributions. Further, the standards and training required of NPS employees are inconsistently applied to non-employees. The park ranger is a compelling and trusted symbol. Visitor survey data consistently show that the public values the presence of uniformed park rangers when they visit their national parks. As the owners of these public properties, Americans expect them to be managed by public employees on their behalf. In 2004, 72% of 14,913 visitors surveyed at 309 parks rated interpretive ranger “very good” and 23% rated them as “good.” The quality of I&E services presented to the public—and the image and reputation of the National Park Service—is directly related to the skills, training, and professionalism of the people who provide the service. As valuable as park rangers are, the responsibility of helping visitors care about and care for parks cannot be theirs alone. The I&E Program could be much stronger with a more integrated strategy that ensured standards and coordinated the work of park rangers, volunteers, partners, and others. Much of I&E achievement depends on national, regional, and park leadership. Success is most apparent when leaders at all levels address the following areas:

- Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness—Are competency based training, best financial and outreach practices, and goal driven planning embraced?
- Personal Services—Do employees enable and encourage volunteers and partners to meet professional standards?
- Audiences—How can we reach out to potential constituencies?
- Evaluation—How well are we doing with what kinds of audiences, and how can we do better?

National Park Service Mission Statement

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and intrinsic values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation, and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

- Partners—How can we expand our capacity in a mutually beneficial way?
- Media—Are they relevant, effective, accurate, compelling, current, and accessible?

National Park Service interpretive services are place-based, learner-centered, and accessible; they are grounded in sound scholarship, content methods, and audience analysis, and they incorporate ongoing evaluation for continual program improvement and effectiveness. Visitor understanding and appreciation (*Connecting People to Parks, 1998*) reflect quality experiences, from enjoying the park and its resources to understanding why the park exists and recognizing the significance of its resources. If visitors value parks and their resources, they will help ensure that parks and their resources will be available for the enjoyment of future generations.

Interpretation and education has been offered to the public for 85 years. Interpreters and media facilitate the public's understanding of their parks through first-hand knowledge, helping them to care about these special places so that they will care for them. Americans visit theme parks as tourists. They visit national parks as owners and stewards.

Enabling Legislation

Authority for NPS interpretive and educational programs is contained in the Organic Act; the 1935 Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act (16 USC 462(j)); the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 USC 4332(G)); and the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 5911). The Organic Act of 1916 created the National Park Service with the purpose to conserve park resources and “provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.” Interpretation and education fulfills this purpose by helping the public understand the meaning and relevance of park resources and fostering stewardship development. The Office of Management and Budget states that Visitor Services, including interpretation and education, is what the National Park Service does best. No other federal, state, or local agency has a similar mission for resources deemed nationally significant by law or proclamation.

Interpretation and Education Program Mission Statement

The purpose of interpretation and education in the National Park Service is to provide memorable, meaningful, and inspirational experiences related to the parks and strengthen public understanding of the full meaning and relevance of the nation's natural and cultural resources. Interpretation and education programs provide enjoyable learning and recreational opportunities for the public on lands that have been “dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” by United States law, and to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.” Enjoyment and understanding of park resources and values by Americans is fundamental to the stewardship of the National Park System.

2004 National Park Service Inventory

Visitation

276,908,333 visitors

144,764,976 visitor contacts through interpretive staff or media

3,586,705 contacts through formal education programs

Facilities

12,225 wayside exhibits

888 operating visitor centers

Personnel and Partnerships

2,025 permanent FTE interpretive staff

1899 Temporary FTE interpretive staff

1,950,000 hours of volunteer interpretation services

\$26,098,000 support provided by cooperating associations

64 cooperating associations providing interpretive services

Resources

293 official park guides and maps

51,440 education programs offered by NPS staff

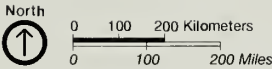
472,570 formal interpretation programs served 13,501,304 visitors

8,791 audiovisual interpretive media (films and video)



Giantess geyser vents steam at the Old Faithful soldier station in Yellowstone. Historic photos such as this 1902 image from the Detroit Photographic Company are available free to the public on the Yellowstone National Park website: NPS COLLECTION

National Park System



- Yosemite National Park Service unit
- OregonTrail Associated sites







A reenactor characterizes John Muir speaking for preservation at the United Nations World Environment Day in 2005. NPS PHOTO

Historical Context

This plan primarily presents data from Fiscal Years 1999–2004 to establish a baseline for future comparison and actions.

Fund Source Analysis

This plan primarily presents data from Fiscal Years 1999–2004 to establish a baseline for future comparison and actions. The *FY 2007–2008 Interpretation and Education Action Plan: Laying the Groundwork for Change* and other subsequent documents will provide an occasion to update data and address current fiscal constraints and opportunities.

Annual funding by fiscal year (FY) for Interpretation and Education (I&E) is divided into three categories: Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) Base Funds, Recreation Fee Demonstration Funds, and Reimbursable Funds. Over the past six years, total expenditures from these fund sources have fluctuated between \$124.7 million to \$151.4 million. In FY 2004 funding was approximately \$146.6 million. Interpretation and Education ONPS funds increased steadily over the past five years.

ONPS Funds

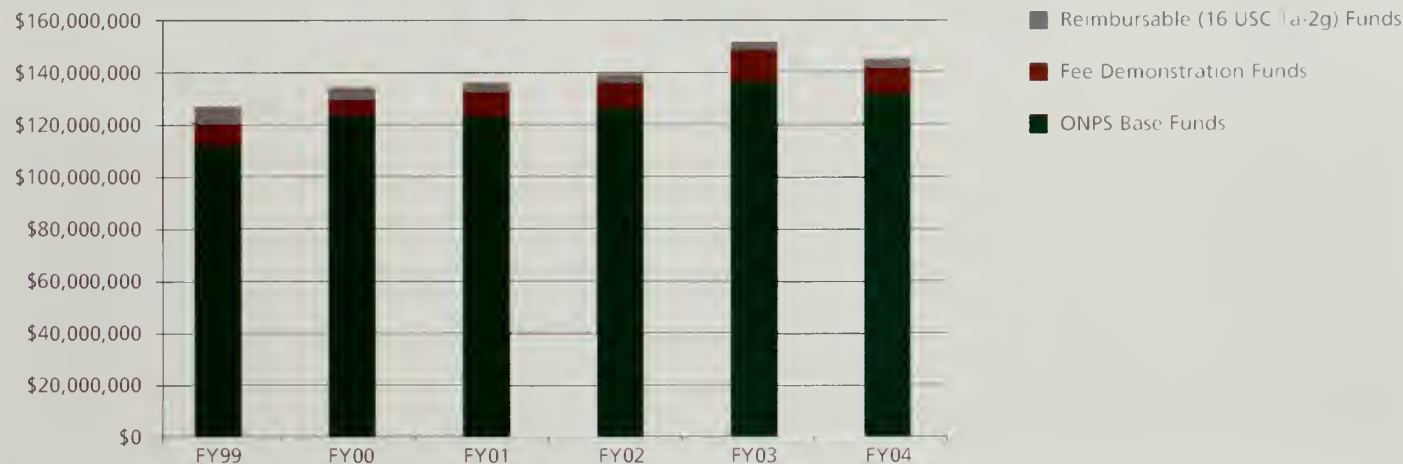
Operation of the National Park System Funds are congressionally appropriated each year, are often impacted by external national events, and include base and non-base funds. Base funds, the largest portion of the ONPS budget, support basic I&E Program operations. Non-base funds support one-time projects and constitute a modest portion of the ONPS budget. Parks compete for such funds annually. ONPS base expenditures for I&E pay

for salaries, benefits, training for I&E personnel, and materials and supplies for I&E activities. For the past six fiscal years, ONPS funds have represented 91% of all I&E expenditures.

Recreation Fee Demonstration Funds

The Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo) was first authorized in 1996 and allows parks to retain 80% of entrance and service fees, with the remaining 20% distributed to parks on a competitive basis. Expenditure of Fee Demo funds is less flexible than expenditure of ONPS funds, since according to federal law, such funds must be spent on bricks and mortar types of repair or rehabilitation projects and on programs that relate directly to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and visitor health and safety. With a few exceptions, NPS policy further limits expenditure for personnel costs to non-permanent employees. Despite these limitations, Fee Demo funding is often used to finance special projects difficult to fund through ONPS dollars, such as interpretive media. Over the past six fiscal years, Fee Demo expenditures have grown slightly, from 5% to 6% of I&E expenditures. Successor legislation, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), provides new authorities that have the potential to increase funding of I&E projects. However, NPS policy will continue to avoid use of fee revenues for operational needs.

Interpretation and Education Expenditures by Fund Source: FY 1999–2004



The \$158.1 million FY 2004 Interpretation & Education budget had the equivalent purchasing power of \$120.9 million in FY 1993 dollars.

Reimbursable Funds

These funds include all money earned through fees charged to provide interpretive services under the 16 USC 1a-2 g authority (August 1970). Over the past six fiscal years, these funds have represented the smallest portion of I&E expenditures, with a decline in dollar amount from \$5.1 million (4.1%) to 3.7 million (3.7%). Although Reimbursable Funds represent a small portion of the I&E budget, they are important for funding park I&E programs. If parks choose to charge for specialized services, these funds might represent opportunity for program growth.

Adjusted ONPS Budget

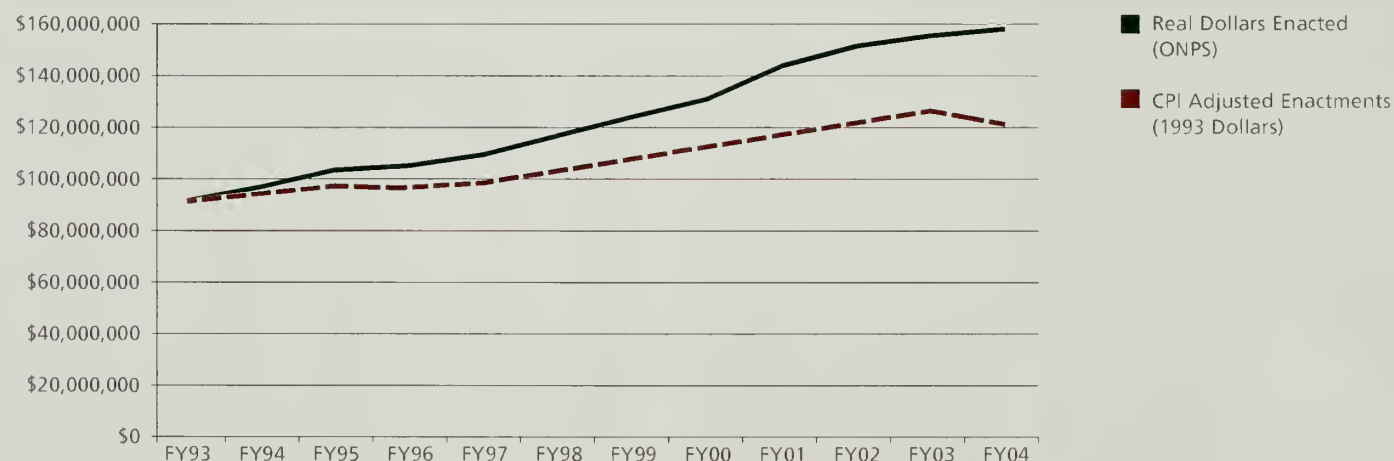
Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) dollars are the primary fund source for the I&E program. These funds cover primary I&E operational costs as well as one-time investment costs. Figures reported by the NPS Budget Office indicate that ONPS appropriations grew approximately 5% annually from 1993 to 2004, increasing from \$92.9 million to \$158.1 million. After adjusting for inflation, the appropriated budget still demonstrated annual growth, but at a more modest rate of 2.4 %. Therefore, the \$158.1 million FY 2004 I&E budget had the equivalent purchasing power of \$120.9 million in FY 1993 dollars. During this same period, the NPS experienced a net increase of 21 park units, with the largest increases occurring in 1995 to 1996 and 2001 to 2002.

As reflected in the accompanying graph, real (adjusted for inflation) ONPS funding for I&E increased in all years, except from FY 1995 to FY 1996 when funding decreased by 1.9%, and between FY 2003 and FY 2004, when it decreased by 2.3%. This shows that during those two periods, inflation outpaced the ONPS funding increase. Annual increases in the ONPS budget for Interpretation and Education have primarily been used to cover increases in the costs of salaries and benefits. Drivers for these additional costs include the rising number of staff covered by the costlier Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), and the implementation of the Ranger Careers Program in 1994, which established the journey level for field rangers at the GS-9 level.

Discrepancy Between Total ONPS Adjustments and Total Interpretation & Education Expenditures

The annual I&E ONPS budgets reported by the NPS Budget Office are considerably greater than the annual I&E ONPS expenditures cited in the Servicewide Interpretive Report (SIR.) The difference between these figures averaged \$19 million between FY 1999 and FY 2004. The reason for these discrepancies include the following: (1) The I&E ONPS budget includes appropriations to support staff and support costs for the Washington Office, Harpers Ferry Center, and regional offices, and expenditures for these offices are not reported in the SIR; and (2) The SIR reports only ONPS base expenditures, while the NPS Budget Office appropriations reports include non-base funds.

ONPS Historical Funding: Interpretation and Education





Valued at \$17.19 an hour, I&E volunteer time in FY 2004 was worth a total gross value of \$33.9 million. Interpretation and education volunteer-provided services represented an additional 949 FTE of park labor, or a 38% increase over the total 2,485 staff FTEs. NPS PHOTO

Analysis of Real Growth

The table below analyzes appropriated base funding growth in further detail, indicating the increase in labor costs since 1999. The National Park Service measures staff hours in terms of Full Time Equivalents (FTE). One FTE represents 2,080 annual work hours. In FY 2004, after adjusting for inflation, it cost 19.8% more to employ the 1999 level of FTE (\$6,286 more per FTE). The number of filled I&E FTE has decreased because staffing has become more expensive.

Increased Cost per FTE of Existing Staff

The first section of the table refers to the 2,690 I&E staff employed Servicewide as of FY 1999. After adjusting for inflation, the cost associated with these staff members increased by \$16.9 million between FY 1999 and FY 2004, with the average cost per FTE increased by approximately \$6,286, including both salary and benefits. This growth in salaries and benefits is due primarily to the transition to the Federal Employees Retirement System, pay grade increases, federally mandated cost of living allowances, and the rising cost of health insurance. The older retirement system, CSRS, essentially excluded retirement costs from the agency personnel cost equation, while FERS covers the true costs of staffing.

Reduction of FTE

The second section of the table refers to the reduction in I&E staff Servicewide since FY 1999. To maintain FY 1999 FTE levels in

FY 2004, I&E needed to expend approximately \$102.3 million in labor costs; however, only \$94.5 million dollars were expended. Due to the increase in labor costs and the decrease in labor expenditures, I&E staff have been reduced by 205 FTE—59 full time and 146 temporary positions. This shows how the increased FTE costs outpaced the inflation-adjusted ONPS budget growth of 16.9%. Over the same time period of I&E FTE loss, Servicewide FTE increased by 624 FTE.

Of the 205 I&E FTE lost, the decrease occurred in four regions—Alaska, Intermountain, National Capital, and Northeast. The Midwest, Pacific West, and Southeast Regions actually experienced slight increases in I&E FTE levels between 1999 and 2004. (See graph on following page.)

Reduction of Non-Labor Expenditures

The third section of the table refers to all non-labor expenditures including supplies, materials, equipment, and other items. Non-labor expenditures have decreased by approximately \$4 million in real purchasing power since FY 1999. This is a 9% reduction in ONPS non-labor expenditures during this time period, primarily a result of the increased cost of supplies and materials and the increased percentage of ONPS funding dedicated to more costly labor.

Operational Costs: ONPS Base Funding

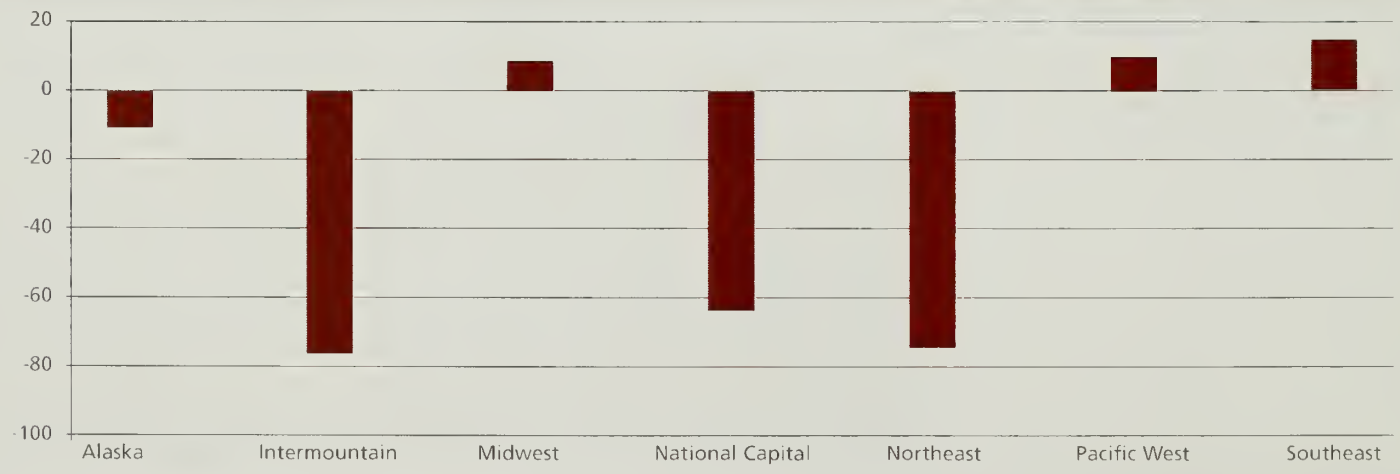
	FTE	FY 1999 ACTUAL COSTS		FY 1999 INFLATION ADJUSTED TO FY 2004		FY 2004 ACTUAL COSTS		NET COST INCREASE	
		Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total
FY 1999 STAFF Cost of Labor (Salary and Benefits)	2,690	\$ 27,991	\$ 75,297,000	\$ 31,738	\$ 85,375,220	\$ 38,024	\$102,284,560	\$ 6,286	\$ 16,909,340
STAFF REDUCTION Reduced FTE Impact	(205)					38,024	(7,794,920)	38,024	(7,794,920)
TOTAL LABOR	2,485		75,297,000		85,375,200		94,489,640		9,114,420
NON-LABOR			37,199,938		42,179,200		38,346,678		(3,832,522)
TOTAL			<u>\$112,496,938</u>		<u>\$127,554,400</u>		<u>\$132,836,318</u>		<u>\$ 5,281,898</u>

This reduction of 205 FTE shows how the increased FTE costs outpaced the inflation-adjusted ONPS budget growth of 16.9 percent.



Regional FTE Change: 1999 to 2004

■ Change in FTE



Additional Staffing Considerations

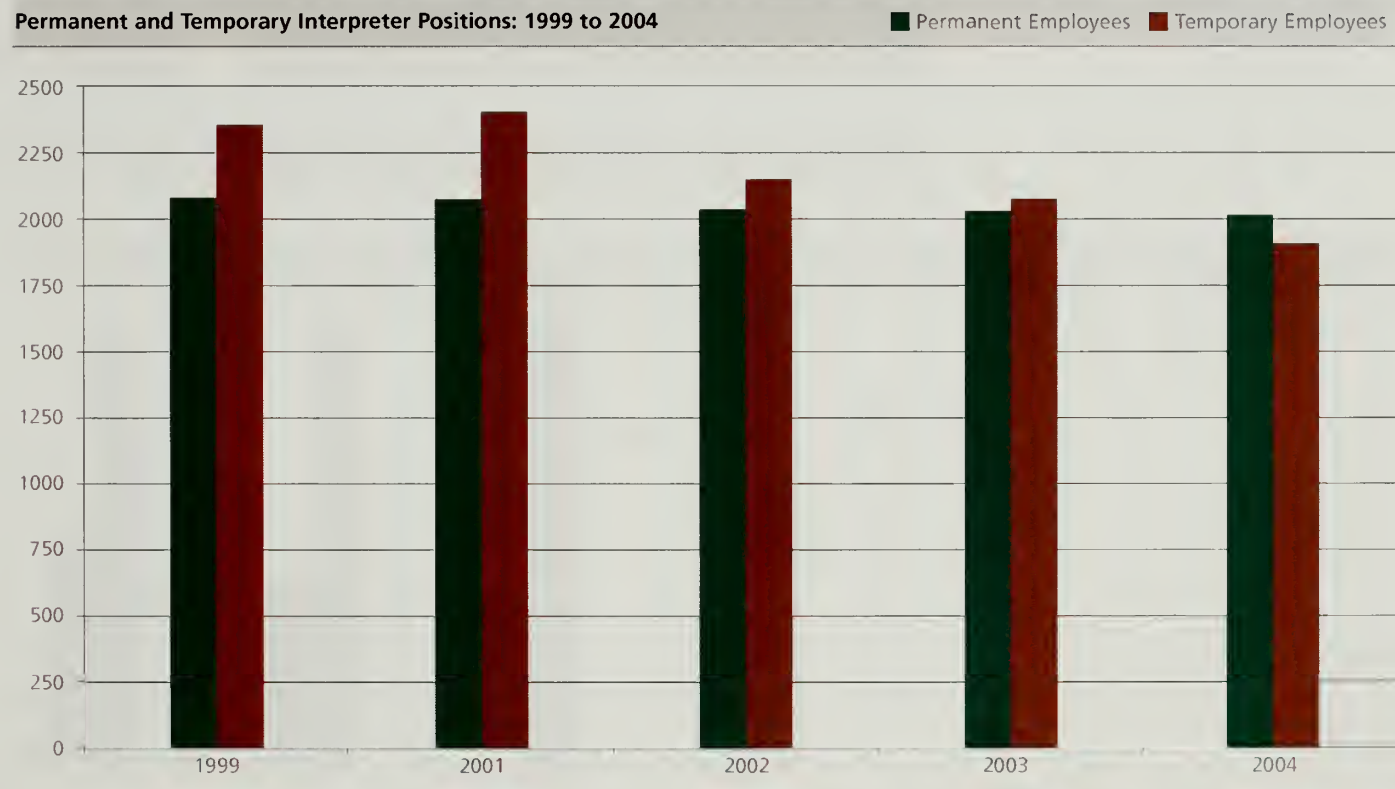
Examining the reduction of both permanent and temporary positions offers further understanding of I&E's 205 FTE decrease and its impact on park visitors. *(See graph below. Data is not available for FY 2000.)* Compared to FY 1999, 75 fewer permanent I&E staff were employed (2,100 to 2025 permanents) in FY 2004. Over the same period, there were 426 fewer temporary I&E positions (2,324 to 1,898). While both permanent and temporary positions declined, anecdotal evidence suggests that some parks replaced more costly permanent positions with less costly temporary positions, masking an even greater reduction in the temporary category. Temporary I&E staff are usually employed to maximize the availability of personal services during peak visitation. It is likely that most of the loss of 205 FTE directly affected service to the public.

The loss of permanent positions, as well as the potential practice of substituting temporary employees for permanent ones,

threatens the expertise and professional standards of the ranger interpreter and educator. This concern might be amplified by a comparison of the decrease of park ranger positions to the increase of lower graded park guides. Consideration of interpretive staffing levels measured each June from 1999 to 2004 reveals that park ranger positions, permanent and temporary, decreased by 427 (1830 in June 1999 to 1403 in June 2004). Using the same measurements over the same period, park guide positions rose by 309 (468 in June 1999 to 777 in June 2004). *(See graph on following page.)*

It is possible that many of the guide positions are being created under more disciplined position management correcting what might be considered the over-classification of some positions during the Ranger Careers program. These are trend figures that do not account for inconsistencies in reporting or count all public contact positions, yet they seem to further describe the general diminution of the professional I&E ranger.

Permanent and Temporary Interpreter Positions: 1999 to 2004

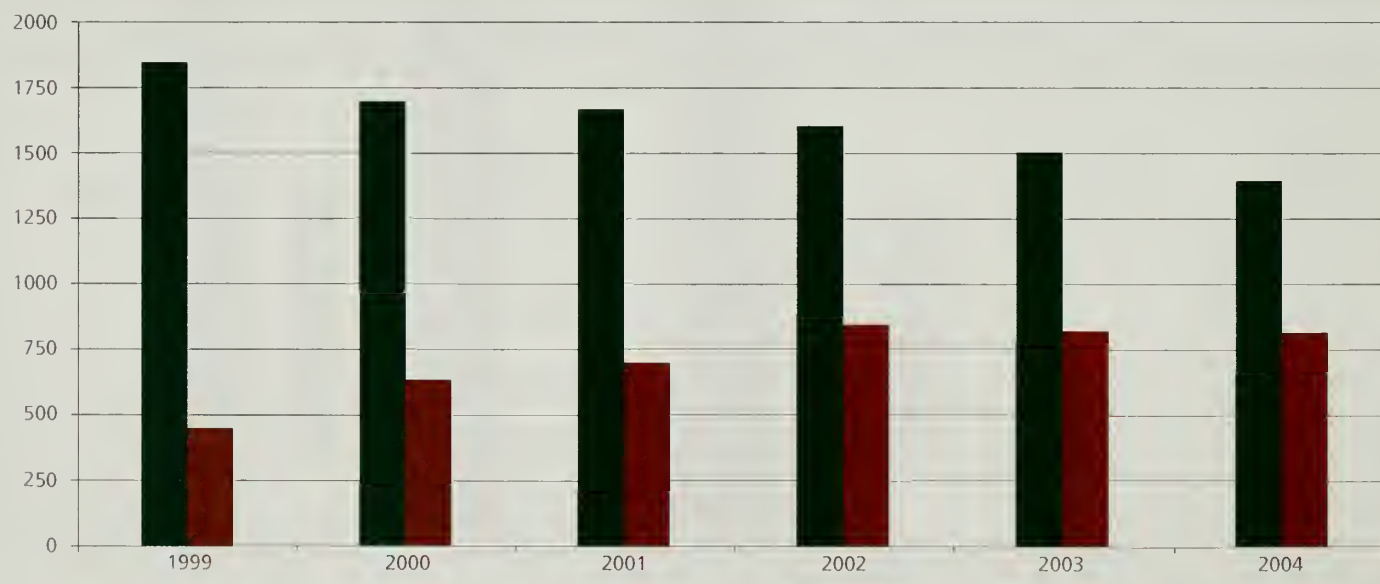


The loss of permanent positions, as well as the potential practice of substituting temporary employees for permanent ones, threatens the expertise and professional standards of the ranger interpreter and educator.

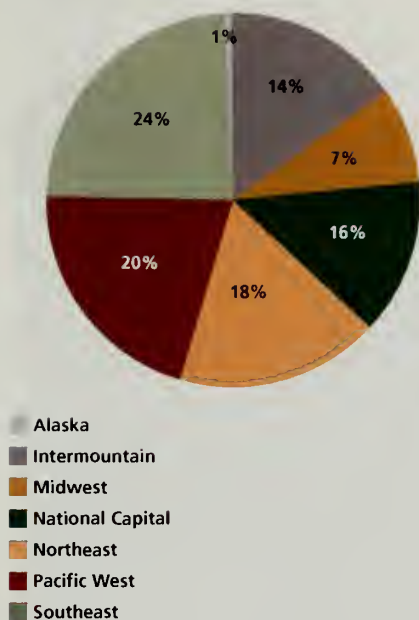


Interpreter and Guide Positions: June Quarters 1999 to 2004

■ Interpreters ■ Guides



2004 NPS Regional Visitation



Visitation

Since 1916 the National Park System has grown in both size and popularity, with the number of annual recreation visitors now approaching 280 million. Visits to national parks can be significantly affected by national events, changes in policies, changes in the economy, fuel prices, foreign exchange rates, cultural changes, increases in alternative recreation services, and the occurrence of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. For this reason, it is not unusual to experience fluctuations in visitation patterns. In 2004 the National Park Service hosted approximately 277 million recreational visitors to 388 national parks, many of whom were repeat visitors; this is a slight decrease from the 287 million visitors in 1999. Recreational visitation has remained almost constant for the last 16 years. The Public Use Statistics Office predicts a decrease in 2005 visitation to 272,258,640 and to 270,126,688 in 2006.

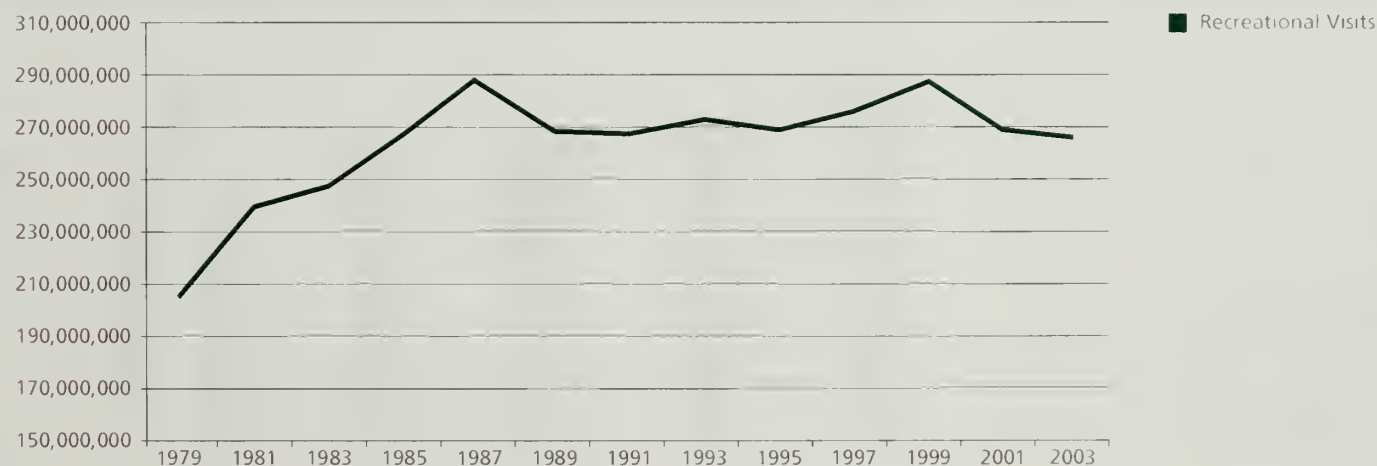
Despite fluctuations in Servicewide visitation, the proportion of regional visits has remained about the same. The Southeast Region experiences the largest percentage of overall visitation, with 24%, or 63,454,694 visits in 2004. Pacific West receives the second largest percentage of visitors (20%), followed by Northeast (18%), National Capital (16%), Intermountain (14%), Midwest (7%), and Alaska (1%). The graph on the following page indicates the change in I&E visitor contacts between 1999 and 2004 by region.

The green bars indicate change in visitation. With the exception of the National Capital and Alaska Regions, visitation has decreased slightly since 1999. The brown bars indicate change in the number of I&E visitor contacts. This change varies widely according to region. Regional and park circumstances, budgets, and leadership may help explain regional differences and fluctuations in I&E visitor contacts. For example, National Capital Region's reduction of visitor contacts should be viewed with the understanding that the region includes far fewer parks, relative to the other regions, and that some features such as the Washington Monument were closed for much of this period. However, the Northeast Region experienced fewer visitors, but increased visitor contacts within the context of reducing I&E FTE.

Visitor Demographics

The National Park Service 1997 strategic plan states that "parks have historically been used mainly by the white middle class segment of the population and many parks do not attract and offer park experiences meaningful to visitors from varied ethnic backgrounds." Current visitor use statistics support this claim. Park managers recognize this issue and have been experimenting with ways to attract underserved audiences, but success is slow. Barriers include difficulty in recruiting and retaining ethnically diverse staff, especially with reduced fiscal resources.

NPS Visitation: 1979 to 2004

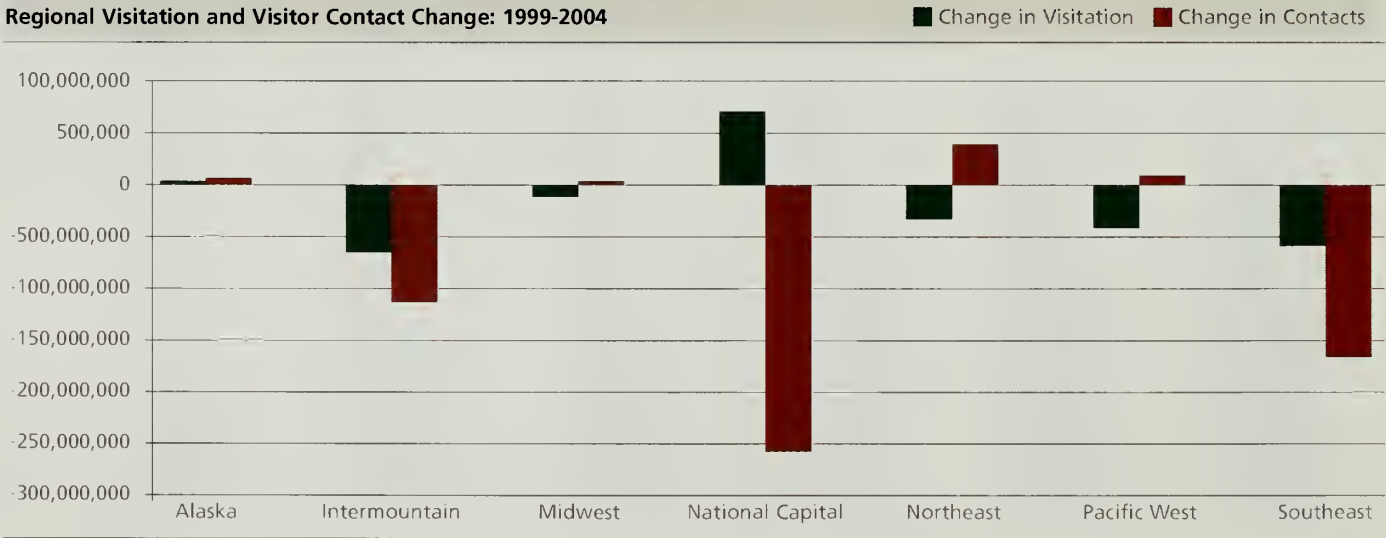


Current visitor use statistics support the claim that parks have historically been used mainly by the white middle class segment of the population and many parks do not attract and offer park experiences meaningful to visitors from varied ethnic backgrounds.



Interpretive programs enhance park experiences and reinforce park significance, as well as the significance of the National Park System. NPS PHOTO

Regional Visitation and Visitor Contact Change: 1999-2004



Analysis of Expenditures

The graph below shows all Interpretation and Education Program expenditures by categories for the past six fiscal years (FY 2000 is omitted due to a loss in data). The figures represent all expended ONPS funds dedicated to interpretation, as well as other funding sources. Alternate fund sources may include Volunteers in Parks (VIP) funds, fee monies, donations, and grants.

Over the past six fiscal years, the percentage of expenditures by category has remained relatively constant. The greatest amount of funds are expended on visitor centers and contact stations—averaging 39% of total funds expended annually. The next largest categories of expenditures are formal interpretation (planned and scheduled in advance) and informal interpretation services (spontaneous encounters between interpreters and visitors) at 17% and 11%, respectively.

Education programs show the fourth largest expenditure at 10%, followed by special events (6%), park-produced publications (4%), audiovisual programs (4%), community programs (2%), websites (2%), and loan materials (<1%).

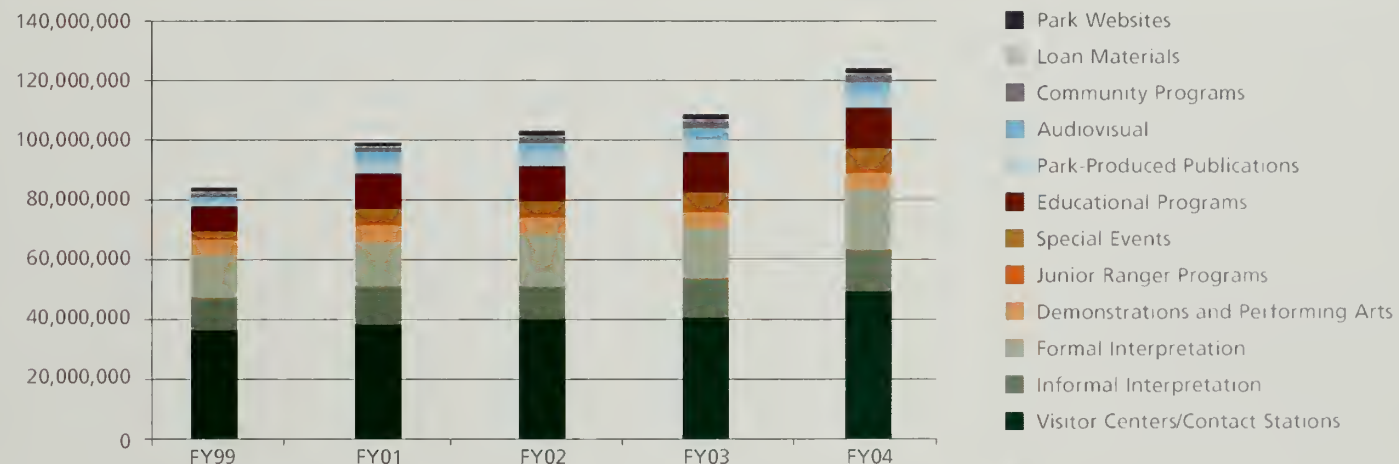
Operations Formula System Analysis

The Operations Formula System (OFS), managed through the NPS Budget Office, is a web-based budget tool designed to assist parks, regions, and the Washington Office with identification of recurring operating increases needed to support the mission and strategic plan of the National Park Service. The tool can also be used to develop data to support requests for additional funds to meet increased operational needs.

Current Servicewide emphasis areas and OFS requests are also used to help establish funding priorities and make funding allocations. This section of the business plan examines funding increases reported in the OFS for the operational base of the Interpretation and Education Program from FY 2002 to FY 2005. Increases in operational funding for I&E are considered in two contexts: (1) as a total relative to increases for other functions and (2) by their distribution among NPS regions.

Over the past four fiscal years (FY 2002 to FY 2005 inclusive), the net Servicewide operational budget increase was approximately \$77.3 million. This increase was allocated among various areas of the National Park Service, as illustrated in the accompanying

Interpretation and Education Expenditures by Category: FY 1999-2004



OFS by Function: 2002-2005



pie chart. Maintenance received the largest funding increases between FY 2002 and FY 2005 (39%), followed by Natural Resources Management (18%), Park Support (11%)¹, and Law Enforcement and Protection (10%). Interpretation and Education received the fifth largest share of gross funding increases at \$27 million (8%). Of the smaller remaining increases, which account for 14% overall, Natural Resources Applied Research received 6% of funding, External Administration received 2.7%, while the following programs received fractional increases up to 1% each: Resources Protection, Cultural Resources Applied Research, Visitor Use, Health/Safety, and Concessions/Management.

Interpretation and Education Base Increases by Region

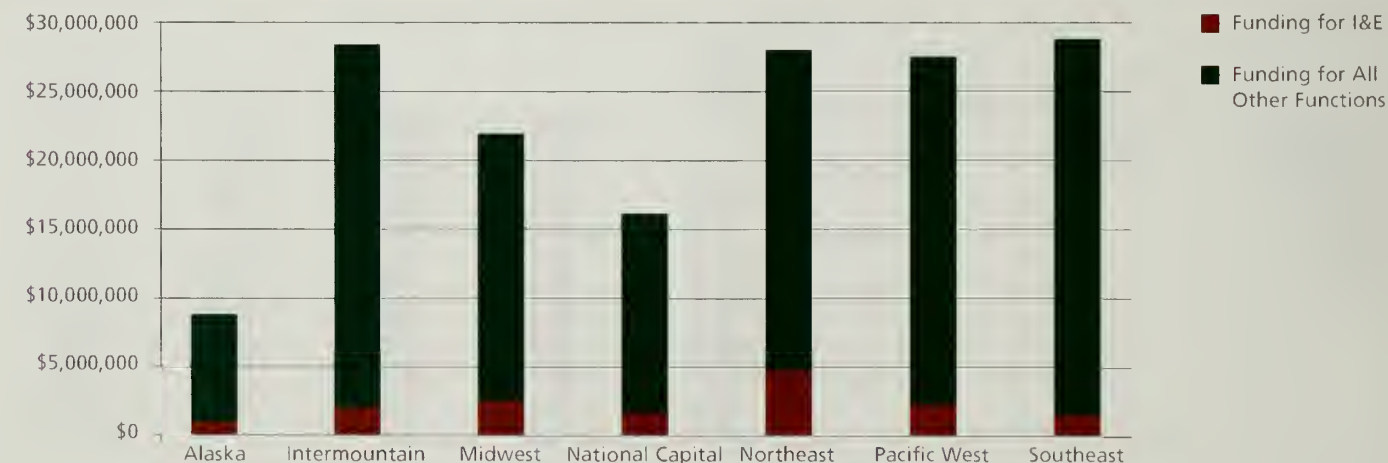
Of the \$27 million base increases for I&E, parks and regions received \$16.4 million, and the Washington Office (WASO) received \$10.6 million for professional services and design. Of the \$16.4 million the Northeast Region received the largest amount of I&E base fund increases at \$4.7 million (29%), followed by the Midwest Region at \$2.6 million (16%), Pacific West Region at \$2.2 million (14%), Intermountain Region at \$2.2 million (13%), National Capital Region at \$1.9 million (11%), Southeast Region at \$1.7 million (10%), and the Alaska Region at \$1.1 million (7%).

Funded I&E requests as a proportion of total funded requests in each region ranged from 6% to 17%. Increases to I&E funding comprised the greatest proportion of total funding (17%) in the Northeast Region and amounted to 12% of funded requests in the Alaska, Intermountain, and National Capital Regions. While the Pacific West, Intermountain, and Southeast Regions were among the top four funding recipients across all NPS functions, I&E received smaller proportions of total funding for total operational increases in these regions (6% to 8%). Although 11% of funding requests submitted by the Southeast Region were for I&E, funded I&E requests amounted to only 6% of total funding received by the region.

A Look Ahead

From FY 2002 to FY 2005 requests for increases in I&E funding comprised an average of 8.33% of all requests submitted to OFS. Requests for FY 2006 show a relative decline in I&E, which amounted to only 4.78% of total requests. A reason for the decline may be that improvements in national security, visitor safety, and partnerships are taking priority for limited funding in the coming year. Requests for I&E funding in FY 2007 have returned to FY 2002-FY 2005 levels, for which they comprise 8.39% of total requests.

OFS Regional Funding Increases for I&E as a Proportion of Total Funded Requests: 2002-2005



¹ Park Support provides the management, administration, and support required for the efficient performance of the National Park System. Administrative functions, such as financial management, personnel, procurement, data processing, and communications services are encompassed as well as a number of internal programs that provide necessary support functions. Also included are cooperative programs that involve other federal and non-federal agencies, organizations, and individuals to enhance the development and amenities of the parks.



A strong symbol of the National Park Service, the image of a bison remains a graphic element of the recently refined NPS arrowhead. Used since the 1950s in applications ranging from uniforms to vehicle decals, the arrowhead helps communicate the agency's mission to preserve natural and cultural resources. NPS PHOTO



At Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, students benefit from a professional development program for educators called "A Forest for Every Classroom" where teachers learn about concepts such as ecology, sense of place, stewardship, and civics. NPS PHOTO

Current Park Operations

Overview

This business plan divides all Interpretation and Education Program activities into five functional areas in order to describe I&E operations. These functional areas detail the five areas of business for which the National Park Service is responsible. These include the following functional areas:

- Management and Administration
- Facilities
- Personal Services
- Interpretive Media and Technology
- Partnerships

The next component of the I&E business planning process is the establishment of operational standards. Standards were identified from policies, Director's Orders, and GPRA goals to describe the duties and responsibilities for various program areas. These standards are used to determine operational responsibilities required of the I&E Program. The final step compared current park activities with the operational standards and identified gaps between required and actual measurements. A park survey was conducted in July and August of 2005 to provide a current assessment of park operations, enhance other data used in this plan, and establish measures to conduct a gap analysis. The 49 survey questions focused on training, operations, planning, and I&E programs in the parks. The following pages describe functional areas, activity categories, and I&E Program needs identified through the business plan analysis process.

Management and Administration

The quality and scope of the Interpretation and Education Program throughout the National Park Service depends on the leadership demonstrated by the Washington Office, regional offices, park superintendents, and park chiefs of interpretation. Without committed leadership, it is impossible to provide effective visitor educational experiences.

Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness:

The Washington Office, with cooperation from the field units, formulates policy, sets standards for personal services and interpretive media, and identifies trends and emerging issues including Servicewide interpretive messages. Increasingly, the

Washington Office also coordinates and develops national pilot initiatives and programs such as *WebRangers* and the Junior Ranger Program. The Washington Office and field units together advocate for I&E and oversee program quality, planning, and budget allocation. The Washington Office partners with the NPS Division of Training to administer a national competency-based training and evaluation program for I&E functions. Similarly, the Washington Office partners with Harpers Ferry Interpretive Design Center to develop and improve processes for interpretive planning and creating interpretive media.

Regional offices ensure the dissemination of policy and standards, assist the field with implementation, and have the obligation to ensure that all parks in the region operate within policy and at established standards. Regions also coordinate funding calls for I&E related programs such as *Volunteers in Parks*, *Parks as Classrooms*, and comprehensive interpretive plans. Regional chiefs assess the field's training needs and collaborate with park chiefs for efficiency and efficacy of programs.

Park chiefs of interpretation direct the delivery of park programs and services, coordinate media development, and plan and implement budgets. Chiefs of interpretation also hire, schedule, supervise, and train field interpreters. The Chief ensures adherence to national policies and standards. The strength of the National Park Service I&E Program is found in the decisions made by individual superintendents and I&E managers. As a result, some I&E programs are more successful than others. Effective managers support regional and national collaborative efforts, seek diversified income streams, and choose to hold staff accountable for quality visitor contacts. They also value national standards, embrace outreach to underserved audiences, and demand cyclic maintenance of interpretive media.

Individuals can deliver excellent personal services programs, but require leadership to provide support and resources.

Effective Training

Providing comprehensive training to rangers, other employees, volunteers, and partners who deliver I&E services will help to ensure consistency in the National Park System. This requires appropriately staffed I&E programs where rangers are able to maintain a good balance of directly providing I&E services

As many as 70,000 practitioners may currently represent Interpretation and Education; yet, only 3,000 receive training at the national standard each year.

while taking on additional responsibilities of becoming trainers, coaches, and facilitators of other park staff, volunteers, and partners. There are approximately 4,000 park ranger interpreter educators—2,000 permanent and 2,000 temporary. There were about 54,000 volunteers who provided I&E services in Fiscal Year 2004. In addition, all uniformed NPS employees, many concessioners, cooperating association employees, and other partners interact with the public and possess some level of I&E responsibility. As many as 70,000 practitioners may currently represent Interpretation and Education; yet, only 3,000 receive training at the national standard each year.

By 2008 a concerted effort should exist to ensure that all those who provide interpretive services to the public are well-trained in the specific competencies I&E services they provide. The National Park Service must provide multiple avenues for training and development, including its own training, as well as learning opportunities from appropriate professional organizations and academic institutions. Since 1995 the Washington I&E Office and the Division of Training have established a consistent set of training standards that seek to develop a competent, motivated, and mission-focused interpretive workforce. The Interpretive Development Program (IDP) provides training and development



Brooklyn College helped establish the National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center which introduces young people to the world of the harbor—its ecology, commercial use, and history. A partnership with the university resulted in exhibit and curriculum development and research, as well as in organizing internship opportunities for students. NPS PHOTO



Park managers and the public are brought together by planning processes that consider policy, community values, logic, and analysis. NPS PHOTO

opportunities to NPS Interpretation and Education employees, as well as to other NPS divisions, media specialists, volunteers, concessioners, and partners who communicate about park resources. The IDP creates, maintains, and revises a national curriculum. Interpretive Development Program training develops and delivers a variety of learning opportunities for participants to successfully master professional standards. However, the National Park Service must revise and make I&E training more accessible to both its employees and partners. The IDP operates a Peer Review Certification Program that assesses 600 interpretive products against national competency-based standards annually. The Peer Review Certification Program is presently voluntary and serves only a small portion of NPS I&E employees. The program should be revised, simplified, and leveraged to ensure National Park Service I&E employees model national standards and effectiveness to all I&E practitioners. A certification program for volunteers and partners may be different from those for employees, but should incorporate the same baseline standards.

Evaluation

Evaluation of I&E activities and products provides accountability and meaningful feedback about effectiveness. The 2005 Interpretation and Education Business Plan Survey reported that evaluation is very uneven across the National Park Service. By 2008 the NPS should evaluate all those who provide services to the public including staff, volunteers, cooperating associations, concessioners, and partners.

Interpretive media at front-end, formative, and summative or remedial stages should also be evaluated. It is impossible to accurately determine how much I&E service is provided by non-National Park Service entities because limited data exist on this subject. The National Park Service has historically been effective at measuring some quantitative results, and a few managers have begun evaluating the qualitative effectiveness of I&E programs and activities. A few evaluation tools are now used, including program audits, the IDP Peer Review Certification Program, visitor service cards, visitor use surveys, focus groups, and contracted media and IDP studies. However, these primarily assess program delivery without evaluating the effect of programs or media on audiences. Many of these evaluation tools are general in scope and do not provide targeted feedback on effectiveness that can be used for improvement. Limited reliable data exist showing the outcomes and efficacy of I&E programs and products.

No central, accessible database exists where results may be shared and applied to similar projects. A national evaluation program is needed to gain improvements in assessing program and media impacts and outcomes, addressing staffing and funding trends and changes, providing relevant and useful visitor studies, meeting the needs of new audiences and formal educators, and to provide direction for program planning and improvement.

Planning

National Park Service planning provides the basis and rationale for all decision-making. The planning process brings park managers and the public together to consider policy, community values, logic, and analysis to create plans that serve as the basis for accountable coordinated action. The planning process generally flows from broad-scale management planning to more specific strategic planning through four interrelated planning processes: general management planning, park strategic planning, long-range interpretive planning, and annual interpretive implementation planning. Although all aspects of the planning process are used to support decision-making for the I&E program, general management plans and comprehensive interpretive plans (CIP) serve as the foundation of I&E program planning.

The comprehensive interpretive planning process guides park staff in defining themes, determining desired visitor experience opportunities, and deciding which stories to tell, how to tell them, and which audiences to target. Interpretive themes articulated in general management plans should correspond to those generated by the CIP process. All interpretive services, including personal services, interpretive media, and partnerships that work to support the delivery of interpretive programs, are based on and coordinated with the CIP process. The resulting parkwide I&E program thus communicates park significance and meanings in the most effective and efficient way. Park superintendents initiate the CIP process. The lifespan of a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP—a key element of the CIP process) is seven to ten years. Approximately 68% of park units either have a LRIP that is less than 10 years old or an LRIP that is currently in development. One-third of park units do not possess completed LRIPs. The CIP process is crucial to an effective interpretation and education program; therefore, the National Park Service should hold superintendents and chiefs of interpretation accountable to ensure by 2011 that 95% of the parks possess completed and current comprehensive interpretive plans.

Summary Services Statements Table for Interpretation and Education Management and Administration Standards

Functional Area	Program Area	Standard	Source	Current Measurement	Gap
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2011, 95% of parks participate annually in the Visitor Service Card Survey.	Visitor Service Card Survey	88%	7%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 90% of parks audit annually three-quarters of concession-delivered interpretation programs to ensure they are accurate, appropriate, and related to park themes.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, 10, DO-6	13%	77%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 90% of parks audit annually three-quarters of volunteer-delivered interpretation programs to ensure they are accurate, appropriate, and related to park themes.	DO-6, -7	46%	44%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 90% of parks audit annually three-quarters of interpretation programs by cooperating associations to ensure they are accurate, appropriate, and related to park themes.	DO-32	33%	57%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 80% of parks audit annually three-quarters of NPS-delivered interpretation programs to ensure they are accurate, appropriate, and related to park themes.	DO-6	57%	23%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 87% of visitors understand the significance of park resources as measured by the visitor services card.	NPS Strategic Plan GPRA Goal	88%	+1%
Management and Administration	Evaluation	By 2008, 95% of visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services and recreational opportunities.	NPS Strategic Plan GPRA Goal	96%	+1%
Management and Administration	Training	Interpretive competencies and supporting curriculum are reviewed and revised by subject matter experts every four years.	DO-6	14%	86%
Management and Administration	Training	95% of supervisors receive 40 hours supervisory training per year.	OPM	53%	42%
Management and Administration	Training	By 2008, 95% of parks with concession services have three quarters of their employees receive training on NPS mission and park themes, resources, and uses.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, DO-6, -7, -32	10%	85%
Management and Administration	Training	By 2008, 95% of parks have three quarters of their cooperating association employees receive training on NPS mission and park themes, resources, and uses.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, DO-6, -7, -32	53%	42%
Management and Administration	Training	By 2008, 95% of parks have three quarters of their volunteers receive training on NPS mission and park themes, resources, and uses.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, DO-6, -7	55%	40%
Management and Administration	Training	The Peer Review Certification Program is accessible to all permanent, seasonal, volunteer and partner NPS interpreters, as well as concessioners and employees in other divisions.	DO-6	3,000 annual I&E training participants	6,700 additional I&E practitioners
Management and Administration	Training	Peer Review Certification Program operation (database, assessment procedures, writing protocols, technology, tracking systems, and other efficiencies) enable capacity of up to 2,000 submitted interpretive products a year.	DO-6	600 products per year	1,400 interpretive products per year
Management and Administration	Planning	By Fiscal Year 2011, 95% of parks have a comprehensive interpretive plan.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, DO-6	67%	28%



Visitor use surveys are an effective evaluation tool for measuring the delivery of interpretive and educational programs. NPS/JIM GRAMANN

Management and Administration Summary Services Statement

In the table at left, the **Standard** column indicates the services standard used to measure the success of the program area. The **Source** column indicates the source document used for the service standard. The **Current Measurement** and **Gap** columns compute the difference between the service measurement and the gap associated with achieving that measurement.

In most cases the gap is a deficit, indicating the need for additional resources to achieve the standard. In some cases, the gap is a surplus (noted with a + sign), indicating a successful program area which currently meets National Park Service Interpretation and Education standards. In some areas, measurement data are not available.



Zion Canyon Visitor Center incorporates local natural elements and energy-efficient concepts into an attractive design that saves energy and operating expenses while protecting the environment. NPS PHOTO



Exhibits at the new Thomas Condon Paleontology Center at John Day Fossil Beds National Monument interpret complex themes such as extinction and changing climates. The facility draws researchers and tourists alike who are interested in learning about plant and animal fossils. NPS PHOTO

Facilities

A wide array of facilities are used to provide Interpretation and Education services including visitor centers, contact stations, education centers, research learning centers, museums, and concession facilities, as well as outdoor interpretive fixtures such as wayside exhibits and interpretive trails.

Visitor Centers, Contact Stations, Education Centers and Learning Centers

National park visitor centers and contact stations are multi-purpose facilities that provide basic orientation, interpretation, education, safety, and information services. Although there are no official definitions, contact stations tend to be smaller than visitor centers, and lack a formal theater or auditorium. Visitor center staffing includes park rangers, volunteers, cooperating association staff, and park partners. These facilities offer a starting point for an increasingly global visitor who wants to know where and how they can find safe and enjoyable park experiences suited to their personal interests. Visitor centers and contact stations provide personal amenities such as restrooms, water, and first aid. Most recently constructed visitor centers include dedicated education space (such as a workshop or multipurpose room) and outdoor interpretation or orientation media (that are accessible 24 hours a day and do not require heating, cooling, or staffing). At visitor centers people learn the park story, the scientific or cultural significance of park resources, how to visit park destinations, park etiquette, and where and when to attend interpretive programs.

Cooperating association bookstores offer sales items that enhance visitor understanding and enjoyment of the park. Interpretive exhibits and films provide interpretation and orientation. From 1999 to 2004 many parks were compelled to reduce visitor center hours and field programs to keep facilities open. In the 2005 Interpretation and Education Business Plan Survey, 29% of the 259 park survey respondents reported a reduction in visitor center hours (adjustments, including hour reductions, are considered “sustained” if the adjustments were based on visitor demand and need and not on staff availability).

The National Park Service should seek to have 95% of visitor centers open during peak hours and seasons by 2008 and provide alternative means of information when not open. Far too many visitor center exhibits and films are aged; many were installed 40 to 50 years ago during the *Mission 66* initiative. The National Park

Service should also develop a priority-based funding system for replacement and rehabilitation of obsolete and ineffective media.

Visitor centers need to meet several criteria: they should be the best and most cost-effective solution to providing interpretation, orientation, and visitor services; sizes should be adequate for current and projected visitation; facility and media designs should achieve desired outcomes; and facilities and media need to be sustainable in terms of energy, materials, operations, and funding. Visitor center construction and rehabilitation is reviewed by the Development Advisory Board for compliance with these and other value-based criteria.

The National Park Service should also develop a priority-based funding system for replacement and rehabilitation of obsolete and ineffective media.

Over the past 15 years educational facilities have evolved to include education centers and research learning centers. Education centers provide park-based learning resources for teachers, students, and community groups. Some are housed in dedicated education facilities, such as the Crissy Field Center at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, but most operate out of multipurpose facilities managed by the I&E Program. Teachers use education centers to integrate park learning activities into their classroom curricula for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The few education centers in the NPS have demonstrated the value of blending the National Park Service mission with the need of schools to strengthen science, math, history, and social science learning.

Newer on the education scene are Research Learning Centers established to foster stronger connections between scientists and park I&E personnel. The centers serve networks of parks that are part of designated ecological zones of the United States. The centers operate as public-private partnerships that involve a wide range of people and organizations including researchers, universities, educators, interpreters, and community groups. One of the primary goals of the centers is to attract non-NPS scientists to conduct research in national parks. These scholars



Kings Mountain National Military Park features exhibits about the Revolutionary War. NPS PHOTO

Facilities Summary Services Statement

The table below captures the standards for I&E Facilities. The **Standard**, column indicates the services standard used to measure the success of the program area. The **Source**, column indicates the source document used to create the service standard. The **Current Measurement** and **Gap** columns compute the difference between the service measurement and the gap associated with achieving that measurement.

then assist managers by conducting research on prioritized park science projects. In turn research results help park managers make science-based decisions. Center educators develop a variety of programs and communications media for schools, park visitors, and the public that convey the excitement of remarkable scientific discoveries in the parks. Currently 16 centers exist nationwide, with a long-term goal of establishing 32 centers throughout the National Park System.

Museum Exhibits

Exhibits provide opportunities for self-directed, multi-sensory visitor experiences that can appeal to a wide variety of audiences.

Indoor exhibits often provide access to cultural artifacts. The National Park Service museum collection contains over 90 million objects. Some parks have facilities that allow them to display objects from their specific collections on a permanent or rotating basis. These objects enhance the park's story, and bring tangible expressions of park resources to help communicate a park's significance. However, there are many challenges associated with displaying curatorial objects in a way that preserves their integrity. The Internet offers a means by which these items and archives can be made accessible to the public while still ensuring their preservation.

Outdoor Exhibits and Interpretive Trails

Outdoor (wayside) exhibits and interpretive trails consistently deliver valuable information and enjoyable experiences to the

public in most parks. Outdoor exhibits highlight points of special interest and tangible elements of park resources for visitors driving and walking through a park. Interpretive trails offer discovery experiences for selected aspects of a park. Such trails are interpreted either through a series of wayside panels installed along the way or a booklet obtained at either end of the trail. Cooperating associations often cover the production costs of the booklets.

The National Park Service maintains 12,225 wayside exhibits that usually last many years depending upon fabrication materials and environmental conditions. Harpers Ferry Center is a national leader in producing outdoor exhibits, and studying message effectiveness and design approaches, as well as conducting systematic analyses of materials to maximize the longevity of exhibits. The condition of the NPS inventory of outdoor exhibits and interpretive trails will be tracked through the Facilities Maintenance Software System (FMSS) to provide data for parks to maintain these assets.

Concession Facilities

Six-hundred contracted concessioners operate a variety of facilities in national parks, including lodging and food facilities, information areas, and facilities that offer recreational equipment rentals or serve as staging areas to provide recreational and interpretive experiences such as boat, bus, and bicycle tours. Concessioners sometimes share buildings with the National Park Service, or build their own facilities according to NPS standards.

Summary Services Statements Table for Interpretation and Education Facilities Standards

Functional Area	Program Area	Standard	Source	Current Measurement	Gap
Facilities	Museum Exhibits/ Outdoor Exhibits	95% of interpretive exhibit content is in good/acceptable condition by 2016, according to the MIDS self-assessment tool for determining "good/acceptable" for both waysides and exhibits.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 4, 5, 7, 8; DO-6; depending on exhibit content, DO-9, -18, -25, -47, -50C, -51, -77	72%	23%
Facilities	Museum Exhibits/ Outdoor Exhibits	80% of interpretive exhibit condition is in good/acceptable condition by 2016, according to the MIDS self-assessment tool for determining "good/acceptable" for both waysides and exhibits.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7, DO-5, DO-80	68%	12%
Facilities	Museum Exhibits/ Outdoor Exhibits	By 2010, 75% of park units have at least one quarter of their exhibits meet NPS graphic standards.	DO-6, -52A, Mgmnt Pol Ch 7	50%	25%
Facilities	Visitor Centers	By 2008, 95% of visitor centers are open during peak hours and seasons and provide alternative means of information when not staffed.	DO-6, -17	68%	27%



The Servicewide Interpretive Report documents the number of interpretive and educational programs offered annually. Additional tools are needed to track all programs provided by partners, concessioners, and others in the national parks. NPS PHOTO

Personal Services

Visitors enjoy interacting with park rangers, and anyone working in a park who makes contact with the public can and should provide appropriate and valuable visitor services. The ability to deliver a full-scale personal services program now depends on individual superintendents and chiefs of interpretation who value, demand quality from, and support I&E staff, volunteers, cooperating association and concession personnel, and other partners. It is critical for NPS leadership to recognize the importance of connecting diverse audiences to parks and nurturing future stewards of America's national heritage. Through park experiences, visitors can develop a deep understanding and appreciation of park resources. To obtain a meaningful and satisfying park experience, visitors seek park staff who can answer their questions, help them decide how to spend their time in the park, and inform them about wonders that await their discovery. In addition to basic information and orientation, personal interpretive services include opportunities for in-depth understanding and appreciation, such as walks, talks, campfire programs, roving contacts, and Junior Ranger programs. "Formal programs" are scheduled I&E activities prepared and presented by park I&E service providers. "Informal programs," often referred to as "roving," are planned and intentional interactions with visitors. They provide contacts in an informal setting on the visitor's terms, with a visitor asking questions and an interpreter setting up an interpretive opportunity through their advanced knowledge of the park's stories and the application of interpretive techniques. Personal services programs presented in parks are tracked and recorded annually in the Servicewide Interpretive Report that documents the number of programs offered and visitors served. The NPS needs improved methods of tracking and gathering such data and for reporting all programs provided by park partners, concessioners, and others.

Education Programs

Curriculum-based educational programs complement school curricula by matching a group's educational objectives with park resources and interpretive themes. Interpretation and Education staff develop park programs, in partnership with the teachers and schools served, based on national, state, and local content standards. Curriculum-based programs focus on stories and meanings attached to park resources, impacts affecting the condition of those resources, conservation or preservation issues relevant to the park, the National Park System, and the park's place within the System. For on-site delivery of these

programs, pre- and post-visit materials are provided to teachers and educational methodology is used to evaluate program effectiveness. Since 1990 demand has increased steadily from schools for NPS education programs. The NPS must continue to provide place-based curriculum-based programs, and develop alternative means such as publications and distance learning opportunities in cooperation with park partners.

Community Programs

National Park Service management policies direct I&E to reach out to park neighbors and community decision-makers to stimulate discussions about the park and its values in local, regional, and national contexts. Community programs and special events such as pageants, anniversaries, dedications, festivals, and other observances highlight meaningful connections between the park, its resources, the event, and the public. These activities, as well as other I&E services, support civic engagement and contribute to public understanding of the park's significance and the significance of the National Park System. Special events often enhance the relationship between the park and the community and often are presented as partnership activities.

Junior Ranger Programs

Junior Ranger programs are very popular among the visiting public. There are 290 parks that offer visitors the opportunity to become Junior Rangers. Interested children, ages seven to twelve, complete a series of activities during their park visit, share their answers with a park ranger, and receive an official Junior Ranger badge or patch and Junior Ranger certificate. The program guides young people and their families in a flexible, self-paced way designed to help them see and interact with the park within the limits of their own time. Most parks develop a booklet that consists of various activities and challenges that, when completed, promote an understanding and appreciation of park resources and stewardship values. In 2005 the National Park Foundation initiated a fundraising campaign to establish this program in all NPS units and provide a reliable supply of program booklets, patches, and certificates. As part of this campaign, goals have been set to increase involvement in these park programs and ensure that 330 parks have a Junior Ranger program by 2011. Another captivating addition to the in-park programs is *WebRangers*, which was introduced in 2003 as an Internet-based experience that has already reached out to 65 countries.

Personal Services Summary Services Statement

This Summary Services Statements table captures the standards for I&E Personal Services. The **Standard** column indicates the services standard used to measure the success of the program area. The **Source** column indicates the source document used to create the service standard. The **Current Measurement** and **Gap** columns compute the difference between the service measurement and the gap associated with achieving that measurement.

In most cases the gap is a deficit, indicating the need for additional resources to achieve the standard, and in some cases, the gap is a surplus (noted by a + sign), indicating a successful program area which currently meets NPS I&E standards.



Community programs connect people of all ages to the park and help increase understanding about valuable park resources. NPS PHOTO

Summary Services Statements Table for Interpretation and Education Personal Services Standards

Functional Area	Program Area	Standard	Source	Current Measurement	Gap
Personal Services	Formal Interpretation	By 2008, informal interpretive contacts will increase by at least 10% from FY03 contacts.	NPS Strategic Plan	13%	+3%
Exhibits	Formal Interpretation Outdoor Exhibits	By 2008, formal contacts will increase by at least 10% from FY03 contacts.	NPS Strategic Plan	23%	+13%
Exhibits	Formal Interpretation Outdoor Exhibits	By 2008, attendance at demonstrations and performances will increase by at least 10% from FY03 attendance.	NPS Strategic Plan	7%	3%
Personal Services	Formal Interpretation	By 2008, Junior Ranger contacts will increase by at least 10% from FY03 contacts.	NPS Strategic Plan	4%	6%
Personal Services	Formal Interpretation	By 2008, attendance at special events will increase by at least 10% from FY03 attendance.	NPS Strategic Plan	7%	3%
Personal Services	Junior Ranger Program	By 2008, Junior Ranger contacts will increase by at least 10% from FY03 contacts.	NPS Strategic Plan	4%	6%
Personal Services	Junior Ranger Program	By 2011, 330 parks will have a Jr. Ranger program.	DO-6	88%	12%

The Interpretation and Education Program is essential to the relevance of the National Park System in the twenty-first century, and is a core function of the National Park Service.

— NPS Director Mary A. Bomar

Interpretive Media and Technology

An expanding collection of interpretive media are available to enhance indoor and outdoor park experiences. Surveys indicate high degrees of enjoyment and value associated with traditional outdoor media such as wayside exhibits, brochures, and bulletin cases (Visitor Services Project Compilation, 2004), but traditional and new technologies both offer opportunities to satisfy diverse interests. New technologies offer fast-changing possibilities for connecting visitors with experiences, resources, and meanings. Radio, GPS (Global Positioning System)-enabled, and ambient technologies will increasingly allow people to receive interpretation and orientation information on personal handheld devices in response to specific locations and visitor interests.

The National Park Service must embrace appropriate technologies as they become available, and become a leader in adapting technology to enhance place-based learning in park settings and at a distance. Many visitors physically go to national parks—and many do so virtually. This second audience is partially responsible for the creation of the busiest visitor center in the National Park Service, www.nps.gov. Rapidly changing technology in the past decade has transformed the quantity and type of NPS information available to the public. New services include online publications, websites, digital images, and video files, and audiovisual services such as interactive computer kiosks and holographic image projection. Current educational research concludes that each person has a preference for learning in a highly individualized and specific way. Interpretive media and technology offer those interested in national parks added opportunities for learning experiences that fit their unique needs and interests, especially for people with certain disabilities. Individual parks are working with new technology, but coordinated evaluation, dissemination of best practices, inventory, and the establishment of standards and strategies for such tools is required to maximize visitor experience and employee effectiveness.

Publications

Official park brochures are important for a valuable park experience. Research has shown that park brochures are the most important interpretive media (personal or nonpersonal) available (Visitor Services Project Compilation, 2004). The staff at Harpers Ferry Center designs and produces these official park brochures which provide a map of the park, address critical safety and resource protection issues, and describe significant park

resources. Park brochures serve as the primary informational product that visitors seek and receive.

Almost 100 parks in the National Park System still need an official park brochure to provide basic information and orientation for park visitors. Historically, parks with high visitation have not received an adequate supply of brochures to provide even one copy per vehicle. Due to recent budget reductions in the publications program at Harpers Ferry Center, a graduated system of distribution based on visitation is in place. Parks with high visitation now receive an assured allocation of 50,000 brochures annually; parks with moderate visitation receive 20,000 annually; parks with low visitation receive 10,000 annually. This reduction is compelling parks to use essential operational dollars to make up the deficit or locate funding from other sources such as cooperating associations, friends groups, or the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program. The National Park Service should ensure that 100% of parks receive an adequate allotment of park brochures to meet demands from visitation with a 1 to 9 ratio and also ensure that appropriate and adequate numbers of brochures are available in other languages as needed.

Audiovisual Media

Park films remain a valuable part of the visitor experience—they can forge emotional and intellectual connections to the park, tell complex stories, and show visitors areas and resources that may be inaccessible to them. Films require a theater, projection system, and ongoing maintenance. In the business plan survey, 47% of the 265 respondents indicated that their park film is more than 10 years old. Fifty-three of the survey respondents indicated their park films were not captioned. Additionally, the quality and effectiveness of older films is limited, since they may not appeal to young people raised in a visually dynamic culture who expect contemporary and sophisticated presentations. Only 31 parks indicated their film was offered in another language. The National Park Service should seek to have 95% of the films captioned and audio-described by 2010, and where appropriate, greater effort should be made to offer films in other languages through dubbing, subtitles, or audio-assisted headphones. Other audiovisual media used in parks include self-directed audio tours using MP3 technology (using small, high-quality audio and video files easily transmitted on the Internet), outdoor audio stations, orientation videos, and short video segments integrated into exhibits.

Internet Publications

Internet publications contain the most comprehensive and current electronic information made publicly available by the National Park Service. Included are websites, digital images, and access to libraries of NPS graphic information such as maps and electronic documents.

The National Park Service website has evolved into a gateway for all park units and park programs. Launched in October of 1994 as *ParkNet*, www.NPS.gov provides basic information about each of the 390 units of the National Park System to people around the world. Although all park websites are unified in graphic design, each site contains specific information about the unique resources of a particular park unit. Responsibility for www.NPS.gov content clearly belongs to NPS divisions of interpretation and education.

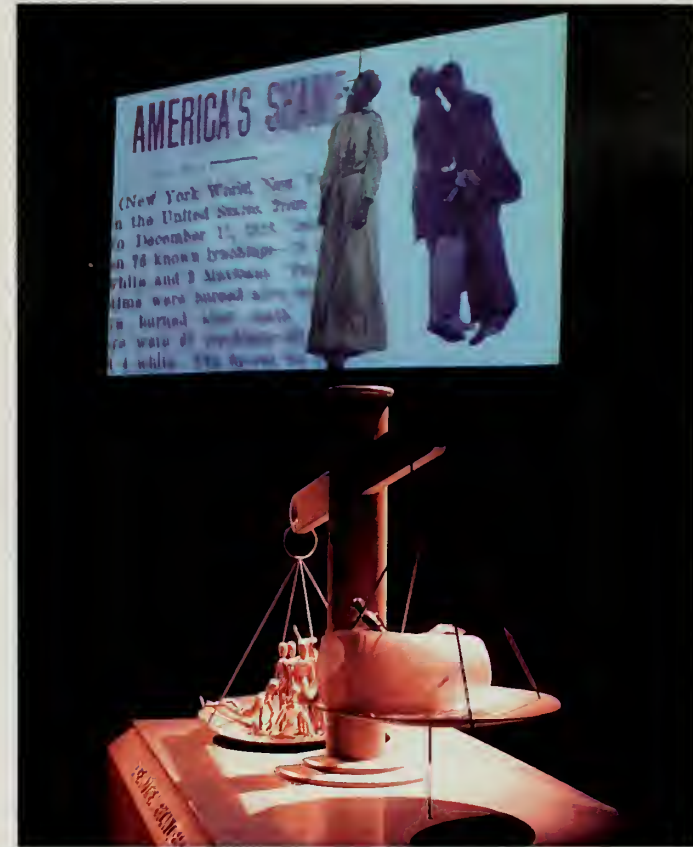
Over the past five years, the number of web page accesses for *NPS.gov* has increased from 1,058,287 a day (1999) to 1.4 million a day (2004). This growth shows the increasing popularity of the Internet and a potential development area for the I&E program. For the National Park Service to remain relevant to Internet visitors, web pages must be developed in multiple languages, especially for parks that receive a high level of international visitation or for those located in highly diverse areas where English is not the primary language.

Interpretive Media and Technology Summary Services Statement

The table below captures the standards for I&E Interpretive Media and Technology. The **Standard** column indicates the services standard used to measure the success of the program area. The **Source** column indicates the source document used to create the service standard. The **Current Measurement** and **Gap** columns compute the difference between the service measurement and the gap associated with achieving that measurement.

In most cases the gap is a deficit, indicating the need for additional resources to achieve the standard, and in some cases, the gap is a surplus (noted by a + sign), indicating a successful program area which currently meets NPS I&E standards.

Audiovisual, computer-generated media, and interactive displays integrated into visitor center exhibits help convey park stories in compelling ways. NPS PHOTO



Summary Services Statements Table for Interpretation and Education Interpretive Media and Education Standards

Functional Area	Program Area	Standard	Source	Current Measurement	Gap
Interpretive Media and Technology	Audiovisual	75% of park films are less than 10 years old by 2016.	Mgmnt Pol Ch 7	53%	22%
Interpretive Media and Technology	Audiovisual	95% of park films being shown are captioned for the hearing impaired by 2010.	DO-42 Mgmnt Pol Ch 7	53%	42%
Interpretive Media and Technology	Audiovisual	5% of park films are offered in a language other than English to enhance reaching local or targeted populations by 2016.	DO-75A Mgmnt Pol Ch 7	13%	+8%
Interpretive Media and Technology	Audiovisual and Internet Publications	By 2010, 25% of parks offer distance learning opportunities	DO-6, -11A, -70 Mgmnt Pol Ch 7	25%	0
Interpretive Media and Technology	Internet Publications	75% of parks have posted their curriculum-based education program on their web page.	DO-6	83%	+8%



Volunteer programs provide special ways for people to participate in the stewardship of their national parks. Investment in park volunteer programs ensures a more cost-effective I&E Program while providing more opportunities for the public to participate in sustaining the NPS legacy.
NPS PHOTO

Partnerships

An effectively operated park visitor services program engages the help of a variety of partners. The need for Interpretation and Education services to be relevant to the many and diverse audiences of the twenty-first century cannot be fully satisfied solely through programs delivered directly by the NPS.

The National Park Service must leverage its capacity and involve other partners. Many organizations with compatible purposes exist that are willing and able to work in partnership with the NPS to deliver interpretation and education services. These include cooperating associations, concessions, local historical societies, museums, colleges and universities, school districts, tourism commissions, conservation groups, health and fitness clubs, libraries, and others. A number of park units have successfully engaged such partners in delivering a broad range of services.

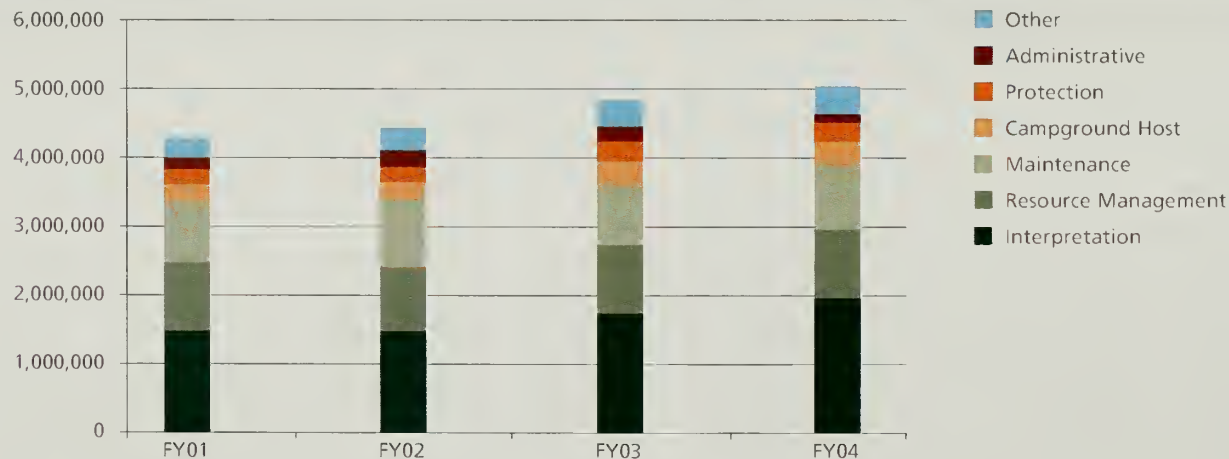
Additional parks could benefit by learning from the success of others and the sharing of innovative approaches and practices. Working with others to support a standard deserved and required by national park resources requires a significant allocation of resources. The National Park Service must invest in professional I&E Rangers to lead, coach, act as models and examples for, and facilitate the effective work of volunteers and other partners.

Volunteers in Parks (VIP)

In 2004 volunteers contributed 1.9 million hours of interpretation and education services to visitors. Volunteers in a variety of settings provide substantial assistance in connecting visitors to the parks. They often bring personal experiences and associations that enrich the story or message of a particular park. Volunteers assist park staff in almost all areas of park operations, including maintenance, resources management, administration, and visitor services. Seventy-nine percent of respondents to the business plan survey indicated their park's VIP coordinator is a collateral duty within the interpretation division. In FY 2004 approximately 54,054 volunteers donated 1,973,951 hours of service to interpretation and education activities. This represents 39% of the 5.2 million volunteer hours donated to the NPS. Valued at \$17.19 an hour, I&E volunteer time in FY 2004 was worth a total gross value of \$33.9 million. Interpretation and education volunteer-provided services represented an additional 949 FTE of park labor, or a 38% increase over the total 2,485 staff FTEs.

Although volunteers work in all aspects of park operations, an increasingly large number of volunteer hours are devoted to I&E services. The graph below shows the categories served by VIPs over the past four years, with interpretation growing from 35% in FY 2001 to 39% in FY 2004. In addition to volunteer hours

Distribution of Volunteer Hours



Cooperating associations respond to park needs by developing tailored products, such as resource-specific books and videos. Sales associates often provide and enhance visitor information services by answering visitor questions, and in some parks, by offering interpretive programs.



The Carriage Barn Visitor Center at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park showcases locally produced sales items and special design features such as white pine cabinetry crafted with wood from the park's sustainably managed forest. NPS PHOTO

devoted specifically to interpretation, many interpretive benefits are indirectly realized in complementary volunteer categories. For example, campground hosts and volunteers who support protection functions often interact with visitors through casual conversation and provide valuable informal, interpretive services. In FY 2005 and 2006, a special study of the NPS VIP Program will be carried out to evaluate this Servicewide function.

Cooperating Associations

Cooperating associations share a rich history with the National Park Service that began soon after creation of the NPS in 1916. Beginning in the 1920s, National Park Service naturalists and historians collaborated with private citizens in forming nonprofit organizations to assist parks and serve park visitors. From the beginning, these nonprofit organizations supported park programs and projects that were not readily achievable through the use of federal funds and personnel. The first of these organizations was the Yosemite Museum Association (now Yosemite Association), established in 1923 to lead a fundraising effort for a museum in Yosemite Valley. Cooperating associations now work under agreement with the NPS to provide public education, interpretation, research, and related visitor services. Since 1932 cooperating associations have been mission-based organizations that support park interpretive programs by providing publications and other items that enhance the

interpretive story, allow visitors to explore particular interests, and enable them to take the park story home through their purchases. An upcoming change in cooperating association policy will require all cooperating associations to develop a scope of sales statement to more completely link NPS and association missions.

Cooperating associations are nonprofit corporations that adhere to laws governing federal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations. They are subject to NPS Management Policies and Director's Order #32: Cooperating Associations. When cooperating associations engage in fundraising to support interpretation and education they are also subject to Director's Order #21: Donations and Fundraising. In 1937 recognition of the legal status of cooperating associations as nonprofit, state-chartered entities working in cooperation with the NPS was placed in the Appropriations Act for the Department of the Interior. Cooperating associations respond to park needs by developing tailored products, such as resource-specific books and videos. Sales associates often provide and enhance visitor information services by answering visitor questions, and in some parks, by offering interpretive programs. In 2004, 67 cooperating associations returned \$28.7 million in donations and in-kind services from gross revenues of \$119 million. The percentage of aid to revenue is 24%. The funds are most often used for interpretive operations, visitor assistance, research, and free publications.



A community partnership supports a floating laboratory and learning center called *Forever Earth* at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The program enhances environmental monitoring efforts and provides educational opportunities for students and researchers. NPS PHOTO

Partnerships Services Summary Services Statement

The table below captures the standards for I&E Partnerships. The **Standard** column indicates the services standard used to measure the success of the program area. The **Source** column indicates the source document used to create the service standard. The **Current Measurement** and **Gap** columns compute the difference between the service measurement and the gap associated with achieving that measurement. In most cases the gap is a deficit, indicating the need for additional resources to achieve the standard, and in some cases, the gap is a surplus (noted by a + sign), indicating a successful program area that currently meets NPS I&E standards.

Friends Groups

Friends groups are organizations that serve as citizen stewards of national parks. Such groups can be small or large, and local or national in scope. They help parks with volunteer work, support park programs and activities, and engage in fundraising on behalf of the park. Friends groups often provide a way for local constituents and other interested individuals to take an active role promoting park purposes and broadening community awareness and involvement. Friends Groups often interact extensively with I&E staff on special events, publications, and fundraising. Information about the numbers and specific activities carried out by friends groups has not been systematically collected by the National Park Service, although this is starting to change. In the future, this information will be helpful in coordinating and developing a comprehensive national I&E Program. Similar to cooperating associations, they operate under formal agreements with the NPS and are subject to NPS Management Policies and Director's Order #21: Donations and Fundraising.

Concessioners

There are 600 concessioners contracts in the NPS. While only 33% of all park units have concessions, 71% of all NPS visitors visit parks with concession services. This significant demand for concession services emphasizes the importance of investing to assure high-quality concessioner-provided interpretive services. Concessioners are contracted commercial operations that help parks achieve necessary and appropriate visitor experiences as identified in a commercial services plan. They may provide interpretive and educational services as part of their contractual or operational agreement, in addition to providing visitor services such as food or lodging. These businesses draw substantial income from national park visitors and provide opportunities that enhance visitor experiences and can help to protect park

resources. When a concessioner provides visitor use services they possess an opportunity to share park information. For example, a food service concessioner may provide placemats that feature messages and graphics about park wildlife or they may provide only bulk condiments and explain how this helps reduce waste. In many lodging operations, concessioners place materials in hotel rooms that provide visitors information about the park while also offering concierge services to help visitors more thoroughly enjoy their park experience. Concession employees also lead tour activities, such as horseback riding or rafting—and provide interpretive experiences as part of the outing.

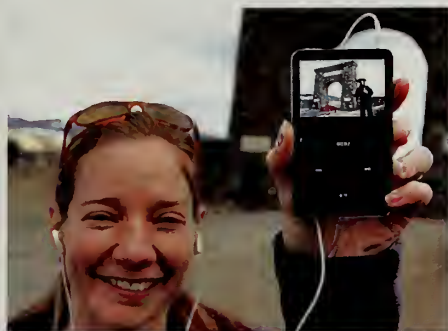
Other Interpretation and Education Partnerships

In addition to the partnerships mentioned, many groups operating outside of park boundaries and through permit systems offer I&E programs that connect people to parks. These include partnerships with local school districts, colleges and universities, adult education services, museums, historical societies, commercial entities, and other organizations. The value of these partnership contributions is difficult to quantify; however, they clearly are an important part of the delivery of services and greatly extend the influence of NPS interpretation and education.

These partnership services could be enhanced and made more visible with modest investments by the NPS. In particular, the NPS could collaborate with partners to evaluate and certify content, brand partnerships, and create a calendar of interpretation and education programs for park visitors and gateway communities. To assure the continuing quality and improvement of the full range of I&E services for the future, it is important that information about these invaluable I&E partnerships becomes more readily available to visitors.

Summary Services Statements Table for Interpretation and Education Partnerships Standards

Functional Area	Program Area	Standard	Source	Current Measurement	Gap
Partnerships	Cooperating Association	100% of parks have a scope of sales statement for the cooperating association.	RM-32	60%	40%
Partnerships	Cooperating Association	15% of all gross sales revenue from park cooperating associations comes in aid to NPS.	RM-32	24%	+9%
Partnerships	Volunteers in Parks	By 2008, the number of volunteer hours will be 5.3 million.	NPS Strategic Plan	2.0 Million	3.3 Million



Individual parks are exploring innovative technologies such as podcasts, webcams, and interactive media to provide dynamic information and interpretation. NPS PHOTO COMPOSITION

Interpretation and 21st-Century Relevancy

To be relevant, meaningful, and effective in the twenty-first century, the National Park Service must reach out to, engage, and cultivate the support of an increasingly diverse constituency. The more people care about parks, the more they will support the care for parks. The more national park audiences have experiences that connect them to these meaningful places, the more they will value these places. Interpretation and education seeks to provide opportunities for audiences to make those connections. The purpose of the national Interpretation and Education Program is acknowledged as core to meeting the National Park Service mission.

A successful I&E Program is critical to the vitality of the National Park System.

So far, this document identifies park-based I&E Program successes, challenges, and funding needs. The following section articulates how Servicewide interpretation and education efforts can increase effectiveness and efficiency by leveraging success and demonstrating value. The recommended priorities and strategies suggest next best steps and address the lack of data available for a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the national I&E Program.

Because the recommendations describe initial actions intended to leverage national investments to benefit individual parks Servicewide, few specific cost estimates are available at this time. Most of the following recommendations require a scoping process before their actual costs can be identified. Such a scoping process will have to be part of a larger strategic effort. It is clear that evaluating I&E effectiveness, investing in partner relationships, training, and national standards, reaching out to underserved audiences, using media and technology in innovative ways, and cultivating effective leadership are all critical to the future of National Park Service I&E efforts. The scope, sequence, timetable, and flexibility of these investments must be coordinated by and fit into a larger strategic plan and vision.

The following recommendations can inform that larger strategy and vision in terms of efficiencies and effectiveness. They do not describe specific methods, only the first required steps. Other documents, such as the National Education Council's Action Plan will be required to articulate the larger vision, illustrate the

specific strategies, and determine the best tactics for acquiring that vision. Some of those strategic efforts have begun. Future documents will depend on lessons learned from the first steps encouraged here.

Conditions are more challenging for National Park Service interpreters and educators than ever before. In many places, there are fewer rangers and more responsibilities. This document specifies increased costs for personnel. It has not described the increased time demands of the budget process, interpretive planning, media planning, web page design, and more. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do what is already required and reach out to the audiences that will make the National Park Service relevant in the twenty-first century.

This plan calls for park rangers to play the critical role in enabling those not employed by the National Park Service to work at professional standards and help engage the public in stewardship.

The park ranger is critical to that success. While there are thousands more volunteers, cooperative association employees, concessioners, and other partners providing I&E services than employees, the park ranger is still viewed as the trusted authority and caretaker of the nation's most valued places. The majority of park rangers know they can not accomplish their mission alone. Like Stephen T. Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, field rangers know that it is ultimately the public who will decide if national parks are worthy of stewardship. This plan calls for park rangers to play the critical role in enabling those not employed by the National Park Service to work at professional standards and help engage the public in stewardship.

A commitment to leverage the work of park rangers to increase the effectiveness of others will require many different forms, models, and management solutions. In some parks, effective approaches already exist. Others parks will have to re-tool the factory a bit—others, to a much larger degree. The effort will take time, leadership, evaluation, a commitment to standards, and a passion for the preservation ideal.

Activities at Crater Lake National Park vary from enjoying incomparable vistas to hiking in old growth forests, camping, or even cross-country skiing during the long Cascade winters. Outdoor exhibits and interpretive trails highlight points of special interest for visitors driving and walking through a park. PHOTO ©FINLEY-HOLIDAY FILMS



Priorities and Strategies

Interpretation and Education Priorities

Much of the future success of the national Interpretation and Education Program relies on the investment of individual managers and partners. National Park Service relevance in the twenty-first century requires public involvement with the intangible meanings of special places. Beauty, health, wonder, democracy, struggle, and freedom are all difficult to quantify. However, these values are the engines that originally created national parks and continue to foster stewardship. To manage only tangible resources is to abrogate the power of the parks. Interpretation and education must be a rigorous and accountable National Park Service function—but it must also be understood as critical to a synthesis of the preservation and enjoyment mission.

Specify Core Function

The National Park Service must develop measurable operating standards and “core” function statements for a healthy and effective Interpretation and Education Program. While most managers and leaders value interpretation and education, few tools exist to help them recognize or strive for quality programs that meet a consistent national standard. The core implications of cutting staff or programs and the effects on mission are not clearly understood or agreed upon. Current operating standards for planning and executing programs are not comprehensive, are rarely measurable, and often fall short of gauging the true needs and value of the Interpretation and Education Program.

A process should be developed for implementing identified standards, measuring their attainment, assessing their outcomes, and further prioritizing investment activity. Metrics for measuring the success of leadership regarding Interpretation and Education operations should also be created. It is important that this effort recognize the differing needs and resources of individual parks and sites. Ideally, core function statements could universally describe the desired outcome of Interpretation and Education programs while allowing parks to use a variety of activities, each with identified operating standards, to produce desired outcomes.

Staff to Support Core Functions

The National Park Service should restore and sustain permanent and seasonal Interpretation and Education positions necessary to accomplish core functions and to meet operating standards.

A successful Interpretation and Education Program requires the National Park Service to maintain a highly skilled ranger staff. Permanent rangers with graduate level knowledge of subject matter, a deep understanding of their audiences, and mastery of interpretive and educational techniques are foundational to the Interpretation and Education Program. These individuals model standards, coach, and teach others in I&E work, advocate for the visitor, are critical for the development of interpretive media, technology, and curriculum-based programs, and represent the essence of the National Park Service. Temporary and seasonal rangers support the work of permanent rangers, particularly during peak periods of visitation. Without them, many visitors would never encounter an individual in a “flat hat,” one the agency's strongest visual symbols. The ranger workforce has clearly been reduced and many standards are not being met.

Inventory and Data

An inventory and reporting system should be developed for all National Park Service I&E practitioners. Few data presently exist indicating the I&E contribution of cooperating associations, concessions, and other partners, and existing reporting for NPS programs is limited. The Servicewide Interpretive Report should be redesigned to streamline field reporting requirements and collect information specific to measuring attainment of operating standards and benchmarks for core functions. Use of Facilities Management Software System (FMSS) as a tool for data gathering and reporting should also be included. Creating such systems is critical for increasing I&E effectiveness, sharing standards, providing training, evaluating outcomes, and investing resources wisely. Understanding the role of all I&E practitioners is also essential to the success of any future strategic planning.

Similar data should be generated for technological, thematic, and programmatic based programs (i.e., “Teaching with Historic Places” or *WebRangers*) offered outside of parks. It is also imperative that current data be maintained on numbers and condition of interpretive media and plans. This business plan provides an analysis of park-based I&E efforts. With a more comprehensive understanding of how park-based and other programs work together, identifying effective strategies and investments will be possible.

Parks with full-time volunteer program coordinators have demonstrated their ability to recruit and sustain an effective and dependable volunteer force. Investment in the appropriate FTE for each park volunteer program will ensure a more cost-effective I&E Program while providing more opportunities for the public to participate in sustaining the NPS legacy.

Leverage Partnership Relationships

The National Park Service can increase I&E effectiveness and accountability by enabling volunteers, concessions, cooperating associations, and other partners to provide I&E services according to Servicewide national standards in collaboration with NPS staff. By embracing and shaping the work of others, the National Park Service can increase the quantity and quality of visitor contacts. Collaborating in a way that embraces professional standards will increase visitor understanding and appreciation. This requires all NPS I&E practitioners, employees and partners, personal service providers, and media professionals, to have access to training, coaching, and program evaluation results—all at national standards. The role of NPS permanent and seasonal staff remains essential to this effort. National Park Service interpreters and educators are necessary to provide the leadership, example, and standards for all partners to deliver effective I&E services.

Partners

Interpretation and education operational capacity must be improved in parks by actively pursuing additional partnerships. Many organizations with compatible purposes—historical societies, museums, colleges and universities, school districts, tourism commissions, conservation groups, health organizations, libraries, and others—are willing and able to work in partnership to deliver I&E services. A number of park units have successfully engaged such partners in delivering a broad range of services. Many other parks could benefit by learning from their successes and the sharing of approaches and best practices.

Partner Credentialing

Create a national program to credential I&E partners. The success of park programs using partners to provide I&E services demonstrates an opportunity to increase public outreach. A program requiring standards of operation that lead to credentials from the National Park Service will result in higher levels of service and quality, while allowing parks the flexibility to offer complementary, rather than competing, programs.

Volunteers in Parks (VIP)

Servicewide capacity must increase to deliver quality interpretation and education programs by investing in the administration and coordination of volunteer programs. Parks presently receive 1.9 million hours of supplemental volunteer

I&E services at a value of \$33.9 million. Additionally, volunteer programs provide Americans with special ways to participate in the stewardship of their national parks. Parks need VIP coordinators with time dedicated to their volunteer program to realize an investment. Volunteers in Parks program duties are collateral, and the volunteer programs may suffer as a result. Parks with full-time volunteer program coordinators have demonstrated their ability to recruit and sustain an effective and dependable volunteer force. Investment in the appropriate FTE for each park volunteer program will ensure a more cost-effective I&E Program—and support all aspects of park operations (not only I&E)—while providing more opportunities for the public to participate in sustaining the NPS legacy.

Training

Systemwide support is necessary for the development of a *Service Delivery System for Public Engagement*. This is a distance learning and credentialing platform used to both teach I&E skills and competencies as well as test for knowledge. The system is composed of learning and testing modules delivered online. Such a platform can be designed to provide learning and accountability for various types of I&E practitioners.

National Park Service I&E employees should be held to the most comprehensive standards and act as models and coaches for volunteers and other partners. Partners and volunteers should be required to meet national standards in the competency areas in which they work. Standards could be similar to those to be developed for first-year seasonal employees, with opportunities for progressive development over time. For example, a volunteer working in a visitor center should meet national standards for informal visitor contacts. Those who give formal programs should meet the appropriate national standards for such competencies. Concession contracts could require the demonstration of standards. Partners could have direct access to National Park Service training.

Modules and assessments can be designed to address subject matter accuracy, civic engagement, and partnership competencies. National Park Service employees could complete modules on coordinating interpretive media development as a condition of



Author David McCullough offers a group of NPS trainees his perspectives on notable events in American history. NPS PHOTO

working with Harpers Ferry Center or a contractor. Similarly, contractors for media projects could use the Service Delivery System to both learn about National Park Service requirements, as well as demonstrate their mastery of required standards. Costs for the Service Delivery System for Public Engagement could be shared by outside learners from related professions.

The Interpretive Development Program (IDP) has initiated development of the Service Delivery System for Public Engagement. The project will make all 10 Office of Personnel Management validated interpretive competencies accessible through online tutorials and project development modules. Professional and national standards in the form of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors will be easily available to National Park Service employees, volunteers, partners, and concessioners. Working with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands (Indiana University), the IDP is already invested in a two-year, \$250,000 project that will create associated learning products. In the long term, this effort requires a database administrator, a curriculum revision administrator, and annual operating funding to meet the standard of updating and creating competency-based learning materials once every four years. Potential to include additional National Park Service career fields such as partnerships, interpretive media, and others is great.

Peer Review Certification

Permanent interpreters and seasonal interpreters must be required to certify in relevant and park-appropriate interpretive competencies. The Office of Personnel Management will validate 10 interpretive competencies for integration into human resource procedures in 2007, simplifying the current certification process to meet this goal. Requiring certification will establish a consistent Servicewide professional standard and will fortify the full-performance interpretive ranger as the coach, mentor, and facilitator for volunteer, partner, other National Park Service divisions, and concession interpreters.

Evaluate I&E Effectiveness

High quality program and media evaluation, systematically applied, is necessary to ensure that the NPS I&E Program is based on sound decision-making that results in cost effectiveness and financial accountability at all levels. Evaluation is also critically

important for continuous improvement of I&E programs and services that lead to achievement of the NPS mission.

Because reliable I&E evaluation data and systems across the Service are severely lacking at present, it is necessary to create a Servicewide Evaluation Strategy and make a significant financial investment in program and media evaluation. This will allow the NPS to develop a Servicewide commitment to evaluation that facilitates coordination, fosters information exchange, and supports application of results. It will also create a National Park Service workforce with the motivation, knowledge, skill, and ability to thoroughly integrate evaluation practices into their daily work.

To accomplish this, the Interpretation & Education Program must:

- Establish a means for ongoing coordination of I&E evaluation functions.
- Develop an I&E evaluation information management system.
- Incorporate cost-effective evaluation and monitoring as part of all interpretive media development.
- Provide training to motivate employees and enhance the agency's evaluation capacity.
- Use evaluation results to identify and disseminate best practices in evaluation and in I&E, and develop tools and products to support implementation.

Recommended Actions:

1. Convene with the NPS Advisory Board an Evaluation Summit (Blue Ribbon Scholars) to guide and verify the Servicewide I&E Evaluation Strategy.
2. Conduct pilot evaluation projects.
3. Create an interpreters' and managers' toolkit of evaluation materials.
4. Identify lessons learned, best practices, gaps, and evaluation needs by reviewing existing research.
5. Create an online evaluation library.
6. Add evaluation competencies to Interpretive Development Program; establish standards; establish training module.
7. Engage the I&E networks at the park, regional, and national levels to implement the Servicewide I&E evaluation strategy.
8. Establish an I&E Evaluation Coordinator at the national level to coordinate the above functions and to sustain communication with other NPS offices conducting various types of evaluation.



Coordination between interpretation and education efforts, information technology programs, and communications initiatives will increase the relevancy of the National Park System.
NPS PHOTO

Study National Park Service Audiences

Mechanisms and tools must be created for the study of potential National Park Service audiences. Only by understanding how different audiences view parks, what they find meaningful, and how they choose to invest their time and money, can I&E effectively plan and deliver cost-effective and relevant services. The demographics of the United States are changing rapidly and dramatically—yet most agree that National Park Service visitor demographics have generally remained the same. Only by reaching out to new constituencies can the National Park Service achieve relevance and mission success in the twenty-first century. All parks have the potential to serve unique audiences. A simple and economical mechanism for studying audiences will allow for much greater I&E effectiveness. All audience studies should coordinate with other visitor studies programs such as those conducted by the NPS Social Science office, by other government agencies, and by groups such as tourism councils.

Create an I&E Technology Strategy

The purpose of the National Park Service is grounded in the park experience. The NPS is responsible for many of America's most important tangible resources and the intangible meanings they represent. Technology cannot replace physical interaction, nor can technology replace a personal encounter with a park ranger, volunteer, or other partner. Still, innovative use of existing and emerging technology can maximize both the visitor's experience as well as employee effectiveness. Technology can provide opportunities for connecting with resources in ways only imagined. Visitors, especially the young, are using new tools to access information accessible in many forms that can address thematic subjects for multiple parks and resources. These technological tools provide outstanding opportunities for orientation, information, and in-depth learning—an improved experience that fosters connection with and stewardship of parks.

Parks are experimenting with technological innovations such as webcams, mobile communications, and podcasts. The Interpretation and Education Program should work with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and other experts to create a coordinated strategy that encourages the application of technology in I&E services with an emphasis on evaluating effectiveness and sharing best practices.

Upgrade Interpretive Media to Meet 21st-Century Standards

The National Park Service should ensure that 100% of parks receive an adequate allocation of official park brochures to meet demands from visitation, with a 1 to 9 ratio. Recent reductions imposed on the publications program at Harpers Ferry Center have severely restricted allocations of these documents to parks. This reduction will cause parks to draw from limited operational dollars to make up the deficit or locate funding from other sources such as cooperating associations, friends groups, or the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program.

Additionally the Media Inventory Database System (MIDS) will transition to the Facilities Management Software System (FMSS) by 2008 to track the condition of interpretive media in all parks. Priority should be given to evaluating effectiveness (condition assessments) and replacing ineffective media with those approaches that meet basic needs. Parks can also increase the use of the World Wide Web to display and provide information about more of the vast museum collections of the National Park System.

Harpers Ferry Center has traditionally been the keeper of national standards for interpretive media and provided planning, design, and production services. This role is even more critical now as parks often use their own resources and collaborate with others to fund media projects. The National Park Service should make every effort to integrate standards, planning, and strategies for I&E personal services and interpretive media.

Informed Leadership

The National Park Service must nurture and support an informed leadership that appreciates the importance of I&E in fulfilling the core mission of the agency. Data from the Administrative Finance System (AFS) and annual Servicewide interpretive reports show a decline in investments in I&E. When value decisions and trade-offs occur under stringent fiscal conditions, it is important for NPS leaders to possess a strong understanding of how I&E directly supports the mission of the National Park Service.

The National Education Council and National Leadership Council could help reinforce the importance of I&E by jointly

Cost analyses can be conducted to ensure that the programs are self-sustaining; this will allow managers to make effective decisions about the range of programs and experiences offered, and will provide immediate feedback as to whether or not the programs are effective.

endorsing a “national statement of significance” for I&E and actively promoting the advantages of sustaining investments and increasing capacity through partners.

Fund Interpretive Planning

Comprehensive interpretive plans (CIP) identify important park themes and visitor experiences through a public involvement process. Superintendents who have chosen to complete a CIP have achieved efficient operations through an organized plan to meet visitor experience goals. One-third of all parks have developed such plans; another third is in progress; and a final third is scheduled for future development. Director’s Order #6 requires that each park develop a comprehensive interpretive plan. Field staffs have developed a cost-effective planning process over the past five years to achieve this goal. The estimated cost for each plan is \$10,000 to \$35,000, depending on the size of the park and complexity of the program. The estimated amount necessary to complete the 112 future plans is \$2.5 million. Plans completed to date have been funded with HFC base funds, ONPS base funds, Fee Demonstration Program funds, and donated funds.

Strategies for Increasing Non-Appropriated Funding and Resources

Because government funds will probably remain limited and competitive, the National Park Service I&E Program must expand its entrepreneurial efforts to fulfill its programmatic needs. Newly generated revenue and/or resources would help to increase I&E capacity and effectiveness. The following strategies vary in complexity and require further study before implementation.

Strengthen partnerships in all interpretation and education services. Parks have benefited and continue to benefit from their relationship with cooperating associations, friends groups, and the National Park Foundation. Efforts to conduct business by continuing to work with current partners and the identification of new partners should remain a priority.

Utilize cost-recovery for special interpretive programs. All parks recognize the need for the delivery of interpretive programs and media that are available to the public by virtue of

their tax dollar. However, many special or advanced interpretive services that require a greater time commitment, special equipment, or that are perhaps offered at unusual times require a more substantial commitment of resources. Parks that have initiated cost-recovery programs or that use the 16USC 1a2g authority have done so with some success. The public often expects to pay for such advanced services. The National Park Service should clarify and embrace the use of 16USC 1a2g authority and/or the cost-recovery authority to allow parks to provide advanced interpretive programs. Cost analyses can be conducted to ensure that the programs are self-sustaining; this will allow managers to make effective decisions about the range of programs and experiences offered, and will provide immediate feedback as to whether or not the programs are effective.

Embrace efforts to create a culture of philanthropy for the national parks. The National Park Service is working closely with the National Park Foundation and local friends groups to seek increased philanthropic support for I&E functions. Donations are an important way people can express their stewardship for national parks. However, the American public in general, and more specifically park visitors, may not know they can make a donation to the national parks beyond placing contributions in donation boxes.

The National Park Service should embrace efforts by the NPS Partnership Office to raise the visibility and values of partnerships, support the partnership council, and increase the skills of all managers in partnerships and philanthropy. The National Park Foundation and many friends groups have established the capacity to cultivate individual, foundation, and corporate donors in accordance with NPS policy, and return the benefits of those donations directly to the national parks. However, such partners will never be thoroughly successful until they can take advantage of the constituency of people most likely to donate—national park visitors. The mission of the National Park Foundation is to strengthen the enduring connection between the American people and their national parks, with the end goal of increasing long-term stewardship and philanthropic support for the parks. Interpretation and education programs are essential in helping people develop deep, lasting connections with their parks.



The book collection of John Quincy Adams is part of more than 14,000 historic volumes housed in the Stone Library at Adams National Historical Park. The National Park Service museum collection contains over 90 million objects Systemwide that help convey the significance of the parks. NPS PHOTO

Appendix A

Director's Orders provide guidance for implementing certain aspects of NPS Management Policies, and are used as a vehicle for updating Management Policies between publishing dates. In many cases, Director's Orders are further supplemented by handbooks or reference manuals.

Copies of Director's Orders may be obtained by contacting the NPS Office of Policy or the appropriate NPS program office, or by accessing the NPS World Wide Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/refdesk/policies.html>. Please note that the numbers assigned to some of the Director's Orders on this list may be revised as the Directives system evolves in the future. A status chart at the web site should be consulted for the most current listing of Director's Orders.

Director's Orders

1. National Park Service Directives System
2. Park Planning
3. Delegation of Authority*
4. Diving Management
5. Paper and Electronic Communications
6. Interpretation*
7. Volunteers in Parks*
8. Budget and Programming*
9. Law Enforcement Program
- 10A. Design and Construction Drawings*
- 10B. Drawing and Map Numbers*
11. Information Management*
12. Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis
13. Environmental Leadership*
14. (reserved)
15. NPS Wireless Spectrum Management
- 16A. Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities
- 16B. Diversity in the Workplace*
- 16C. Discrimination Complaints Process*
17. National Park Service Tourism
18. Wildland Fire Management
19. Records Management*
20. Agreements
21. Donations and Fundraising
22. Fee Collection*
23. (reserved)
24. NPS Museum Collections Management
25. Land Protection*
26. Youth Programs*
27. Challenge Cost-share Program*
28. Cultural Resource Management
29. Ethnography Program*
- 30A. Hazard and Solid Waste Management*
- 30B. Hazardous Spill Response*
- 30C. Damage Assessments*
31. Travel Procedures*
32. Cooperating Associations
33. Archeology*
34. (reserved)
- 35A. Sale or Lease of Park Services, Resources, or Water in Support of Activities Outside the Boundaries of National Park Areas
- 35B. Sale of Park Utility Services to Support Activities Within the Boundaries of National Park Areas*
36. Housing Management*
37. Home Businesses in Parks*
38. Real Property Leasing*
39. (reserved)
40. Dams and Appurtenant Works*
41. Wilderness Preservation & Management
42. Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities
43. Uniform Program
44. Personal Property Management
- 45-1. National Scenic and Historic Trails*
46. Wild and Scenic Rivers*
47. Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management
- 48A. Concession Management*
- 48B. Commercial Use Authorizations*
49. (reserved) 50A. Workers' Compensation Case Management
- 50B. Occupational Safety and Health
- 50C. Visitor Safety*
51. Emergency Medical Services*
- 52A. Communicating the NPS Mission
- 52B. Graphic Design Standards*
- 52C. Park Signs*
- 52D. Use of the Arrowhead Symbol*
53. Special Park Uses
54. Management Accountability*
55. (reserved)
56. International Affairs*
57. Occupational Medical Standards, Health and Fitness
58. Structural Fire Management
59. (reserved)
60. Aviation Management*
61. National Cemeteries*
62. Property Acquisition*
63. Geographic Names*
64. Commemorative Works and Plaques*
65. Explosives Use and Blasting Safety
66. Freedom of Information Act and Protected Resource Information*
67. Copyright and Trademarks*
68. Notification Protocol For Conduct of Employee Investigations
69. Serving on Boards of Directors*
70. Internet and Intranet Publishing
- 71A. Relationships with American Indians and Alaska Natives*
- 71B. Indian Sacred Sites*
72. (reserved)
73. (reserved)
74. Studies and Collecting*
75. Media Relations*
76. Legislative Affairs Program*
- 77- 1. Wetland Protection
- 77- 2. Floodplain Management
- 77- 3. Domestic and Feral Livestock Management*
- 77- 4. Substances Used for Wildlife Management and Research
- 77- 5. (reserved)
- 77- 6. (reserved)
- 77- 7. Integrated Pest Management
- 77- 8. Endangered Species
- 77- 9. In-park Borrow Material
78. Social Science*
79. Relocation Policies and Procedures*
80. Facility Management Program*
81. Maintenance Management Program*
82. Public Use Reporting*
83. Public Health
84. Library Resources*
85. Garnishments and Levies*
86. (reserved)
- 87A. Park Roads and Parkways*
- 87B. Alternative Transportation Systems*
- 87C. Transportation System Funding*
- 87D. Non-NPS Federal Aid Roads
88. Preparing Administrative Records*
89. Space Management*
90. Value Analysis*
91. Advisory Boards and Commissions*
92. Human Resources*
93. Conflict Resolution*
94. Appeals and Hearings*

Appendix B

These questions comprise a web-based survey organized in 2005 by the National Education Council to obtain information from individual park units and draw conclusions for nationwide assessment. *The online survey was delivered by Zoomerang, Copyright ©1999-2005, MarketTools, Inc., All Rights Reserved.*

Interpretation and Education Business Plan Survey

Greetings! You have been selected to participate in a survey organized by the National Education Council under the leadership of Associate Director Chris Jarvi and the Accounting Operation Center (AOC) National Business Plan effort that is chaired by Bruce Sheaffer, NPS Comptroller. The purpose of this survey is to obtain information from individual park units and draw conclusions for nationwide assessment. Responses from this survey will be used to complete the first business plan for a national program, Interpretation and Education. To maintain accuracy, future contact may be necessary, so please ensure that both a correct phone number and e-mail address are included in the survey.

The survey is web-based, contains 49 questions, and will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Please report as you would for the Servicewide Interpretive Report (SIR). After completing each page and selecting the "submit" button at the bottom of the page, survey results are saved. Survey respondents therefore have the option of stopping the survey at any time, and resuming at a later date by returning to the weblink in the survey e-mail. You will be brought to first incomplete page.

If you are responsible for education and interpretation program management for more than one park unit, we ask that you complete the survey for each park. Those persons reporting for more than one park unit must reply to the survey e-mail to gain access to a new survey. Send the message: Chief of Interpretation for multiple parks. A new weblink will then be provided for you.

Please complete the survey by August 10, 2005. If you have questions or comments, you may contact Cherry Payne at 305-242-7750 or e-mail her at cherry_payne@nps.gov. Thank you for your time.

1. Alpha Code: *four letter park code*
- STAFFING
2. How many positions are in your interpretation/education organizational chart?
3. How many of those positions were filled in FY 04?
4. How recently was the current organizational chart last approved? *(1-3 months, 4-6 months, 7 month-1 year, >1 year, unknown)*
5. At your park, is the Volunteer Coordinator position within the interpretation division?
6. The Volunteer Coordinator position is: *(collateral, formal, not applicable)*
- TRAINING
7. If your park conducts annual training for interpreters please indicate, by percentages, how much training time is devoted to each of the following areas. Your total should be 100%. Leave question blank if none apply. *(a) Interpretive competencies and skills (b) Park operations (c) Park specific subject matter and resource issues (d) Total figure from above*
8. The total number of interpretive supervisors in your park is:
9. Indicate how many of your supervisors have attended the following: *(a) Interpretive Operations for Frontline Supervisors (b) Interpretive Leadership Seminar*
10. How many of your interpretive supervisors are current on mandatory supervisory training (40 hours per fiscal year)?
11. Is interpretive training for NPS frontline staff of other divisions offered at your park?
12. Estimate the percentage of your interpretation and education employees (permanents, term, and subject-to-furlough employees, not seasonal) who have attended each of the following TEL satellite training programs: *(The Interpretive*

- Process Model, The Interpretive Analysis Model, The Interpretive Talk, Informal Visitor Contacts, Interpretive Writing, Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs, Conducted Activities, Curriculum-based Education Programs, Interpretive Planning, Interpretive Media, Coaching and Training Interpreters, Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison, Interpreting Controversy and Multiple Points of View)*
13. Estimate the percentage of your interpretation and education employees (permanents, term, and subject-to-furlough employees, not seasonal) who have attended each of the following classroom trainings at the park, regional, or national level: *(The Interpretive Talk, Informal Visitor Contacts, Interpretive Writing Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs, Conducted Activities, Curriculum-based Education Programs, Interpretive Planning, Interpretive Media, Coaching and Training Interpreters, Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison)*
14. Estimate the percentage of your interpretation and education seasonal staff who have attended each of the following TEL satellite training programs: *(The Interpretive Process Model, The Interpretive Analysis Model, The Interpretive Talk, Informal Visitor Contacts, Interpretive Writing, Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs, Conducted Activities, Curriculum-based Education Programs, Interpretive Planning, Interpretive Media, Coaching and Training Interpreters, Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison, Interpreting Controversy and Multiple Points of View)*
15. Estimate the percentage of your interpretation and education seasonal staff who have attended each of the following classroom trainings at the park, regional, or national level: *(The Interpretive Talk, Informal Visitor Contacts, Interpretive Writing, Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs, Conducted Activities, Curriculum-based Education Programs, Interpretive Planning, Interpretive Media,*

Coaching and Training Interpreters, Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison)

holders [commercial use], cooperating association, other)

23. Check all grade levels for which your park offers curriculum-based education programs: *(pre-school primary [k-2] elementary [3-5] middle school [6-8] high school [9-12] college post secondary adult [e.g. Elderhostel], not applicable)*

24. Does your park offer curriculum-based education programs for teacher professional development?

25. Check all age/educational attainment levels for which your park offers interpretive programs, excluding those that are curriculum-based: *(2-5 years old, 6-10 years old, 11-15 years old, 16-18 years old, college, post secondary adult [elder hostel], not applicable)*

26. Does your park offer interpretive programs, excluding those that are curriculum-based, for developmentally disabled persons?

NON PERSONAL SERVICES/MEDIA

27. Please rate the item in the following statements: Overall interpretive exhibit content at my park is: *(1 Extremely Poor, 2 Below Average, 3 Average, 4 Above Average, 5 Excellent)* Overall interpretive exhibit condition at my park is: *(1 Extremely Poor, 2 Below Average, 3 Average, 4 Above Average, 5 Excellent)*

28. What percentage of exhibits meets NPS graphic identity standards? *(> 75%, 51 - 75%, 25 - 50%, < 25%, none, not applicable)*

29. Does your park offer an orientation film?

30. How many orientation films does your park have?

31. How many of those films are less than 10 years old?

32. How many of those films are closed captioned for the hearing impaired?

33. How many of those films are offered in a language other than English?

34. Which of the following non-personal media services are offered for visitor use by your park *(NPS sponsored only)? (films, videos, slide programs, newspapers, site bulletins, trail guides, park brochures, audio cassette tours, CD-ROMs, other, please specify)*

35. Which of the following non-personal media devices are offered for visitor use by your park partners (incidental business permit holders [commercial use], concessioners, cooperating associations, friends groups, etc.)? Check all that apply: *(films, videos, slide programs, newspapers, site bulletins, trail guides, park brochures, audio cassette tours, CD-ROMs, other, please specify)*

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS AND FRIENDS GROUPS

36. How recently was your Scope of Sales Statement last updated? (Scope of Sales Statement: in-park review of the types of sales items and how they address the interpretive themes of a park)

37. In FY04, how many of the following programs were sponsored (partial or full sponsorship) by donations from friends groups? *(performing arts, historical demonstrations, scientific demonstrations, recreation, safety/skill demonstrations, Junior Ranger program, special events, curriculum-based education programs, other, please specify)*

TECHNOLOGY AND DISTANCE LEARNING

38. Is information about your park's Junior Ranger program on your park's web page?

39. Is information about your park's curriculum-based education program on your web page?

40. Check all distance learning opportunities offered by your park in the last 2 years. *(teleconferences, satellite web cast, web chats, interactive web courses, not applicable, other, please specify)*

FACILITIES

41. What is the total number of facilities, such as visitor centers or contact stations,

in your park where interpretive services are offered?

42. Of the total number of facilities stated in question 41, how many of them are open year-round and: (a) *open on a daily basis* (b) *open less than daily*

43. Of the total number of facilities stated in question 41, how many of them are open seasonally and: (a) *open on a daily basis* (b) *open less than daily*

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

44. The Interpretation Division Chief is: *(interpretive professional, other professional [i.e. law enforcement])*

45. List any proactive policies in place at your park that promote and encourage participation in the Interpretive Development Program by front line staff:

46. Check all interpretive programs for which your park uses Cost Recovery or 16USC 1A2G: *(performing arts, historical demonstrations, scientific demonstrations, recreation safety/skill demonstrations, Junior Ranger programs, special events, curriculum-based education programs, not applicable, other, please specify)*

47. Do you have any additional comments regarding your park's ability to provide programmatic services based on current staffing and funding?

48. Further comments:

49. Complete your contact information: *(name, phone number, e-mail address)*

Thank you for your participation and time. We appreciate your effort and know the ultimate goal of making the interpretation and education program stronger is only accomplished when we work together. Please contact Cherry Payne by telephone at 305-242-7751 or via e-mail at cherry_payne@nps.gov if you have further questions or comments. We look forward to sending you the business plan at the end of the year.

Glossary

Although not comprehensive, this glossary highlights some of the key terms and evolving concepts that are important to understanding National Park Service management policies and principles. Further definitions may be obtained from Director's Orders and Reference Manuals that are either published or will soon be available. Statutory definitions can be accessed on-line (e.g., at www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/.)

Abbreviations

- ACHP Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- AFS Administrative Finance System
- ANILCA Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
- CFR Code of Federal Regulations
- CIP Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
- CRM Cultural Resource Management (plan)
- DM Department of the Interior Manual
- DO Director's Order
- EA Environmental Assessment
- EFOIA/FOIA Electronic Freedom of Information/Freedom of Information Act
- EIS Environmental Impact Statement
- ESA Endangered Species Act of 1973
- FLREA Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004
- FR Federal Register
- FMSS Facilities Management Software System
- GPRA Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
- GMP General Management Plan
- I&E Interpretation and Education
- IDP Interpretive Development Program
- LPP Land Protection Plan
- LRIP Long-Range Interpretive Plan
- LWCF Land and Water Conservation Fund
- MIDS Media Inventory Database System
- NAGPRA Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- NEPA National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- NHPA National Historic Preservation Act
- PL Public Law
- RM Reference Manual
- USC United States Code
- VERP Visitor Experience and Resource Protection

Definition of Key Terms

- Accessibility**— the provision of NPS programs, facilities, and services in ways that include individuals with disabilities, or makes available to those individuals the same benefits available to persons without disabilities. See also, "universal design."
- Accession**— a transaction whereby a museum object or specimen is acquired for a museum collection. Accessions include gifts, exchanges, purchases, field collections, loans, and transfers.
- Administrative record**— the "paper trail" that documents an agency's decision-making process and the basis for the agency's decision. It includes all materials directly or indirectly considered by persons involved in the decision-making process. These are the documents that a judge will review to determine whether the process and the resulting agency decision were proper.
- Best management practices (BMPs)**— practices that apply the most current means and technologies available to not only comply with mandatory environmental regulations, but also maintain a superior level of environmental performance. See also, "sustainable practices/ principles."
- Carrying capacity (visitor)**— the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and visitor experience conditions in a park.
- Consultation**— a discussion, conference, or forum in which advice or information is sought or given, or information or ideas are exchanged. Consultation generally takes place on an informal basis; formal consultation requirements for compliance with section 106 of NHPA are published in 36 CFR Part 800.
- Cooperating associations**— private, non-profit corporations established under state law which support the educational, scientific, historical, and interpretive activities of the NPS in a variety of ways, pursuant to formal agreements with the Service.
- Cultural landscape**— a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources

- and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or esthetic values. There are four non- mutually exclusive types of cultural landscapes: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.
- Cultural resource**— an aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture, or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for the National Register of Historic Places, and as archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources for NPS management purposes.
- Directives system**— policy guidance system established by Director's Order #1 in 1996. The system replaces and updates guidance documents formerly known as NPS Guidelines, Special Directives, and Staff Directives. The system consists of 3 levels: Level 1— NPS Management Policies— first overview level of the Directives system. Level 2— Director's Orders— operational policies and procedures that supplement Level 1. Level 3— Reference Manuals and other detailed guidance on how to implement Service- wide policies and procedures.
- Ecosystem**— a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment, considered as a unit.
- Environmental assessment**— a brief NEPA document that is prepared (a) to help determine whether the impact of a proposed action or its alternatives could be significant; (b) to aid the NPS in compliance with NEPA by evaluating a proposal that will have no significant impacts, but may have measurable adverse impacts; or (c) as an evaluation of a proposal that is either not described on the list of categorically excluded actions, or is on the list, but exceptional circumstances apply.
- Environmental impact statement**— a detailed NEPA analysis document that is

prepared when a proposed action or alternatives have the potential for significant impact on the human environment.

Environmental leadership—advocating on a personal and organizational level best management practices and the principals of sustainability, and making decisions that demonstrate a commitment to those practices and principals.

Ethnographic landscape—an area containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that traditionally associated people define as heritage resources. The area may include plant and animal communities, structures, and geographic features, each with their own special local names.

Ethnographic resources—objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Research and consultation with associated people identifies and explains the places and things they find culturally meaningful. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are called traditional cultural properties.

Friends groups—many parks enjoy relationships with nonprofit corporations established to raise funds and build partnerships. At the national level, the National Park Foundation is congressionally authorized to collaborate with the NPS and key partners to support a network of opportunities for diverse people to connect with parks through personally meaningful experiences.

Gateway community—a community that exists in close proximity to a national park, and whose residents and elected officials often have shared interests and concerns regarding decisions that are made in managing the park. Gateway communities usually offer food, lodging, and other services to park visitors. They also provide opportunities for employee housing, and a convenient location to purchase goods and services essential to park administration.

General management plan (GMP)—a plan which clearly defines direction for resource

preservation and visitor use in a park, and serves as the basic foundation for decision making. GMPs are developed with broad public involvement.

Historic property—a district, site, building, structure, or object significant in the history of American archeology, architecture, culture, engineering, or politics at the national, state, or local level.

Implementation plan—a plan that focuses on how to implement an activity or project needed to achieve a long-term goal. An implementation plan may direct a specific project or an ongoing activity.

Management prescriptions—a planning term referring to statements about desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, along with appropriate kinds and levels of management, use, and development for each park area.

Mission-critical—something that is essential to the accomplishment of an organization's core responsibilities.

National Park System—the sum total of the land and water now or hereafter administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service for park, monument, historic, parkway, recreational or other purposes.

Native Americans—includes American Indians, Alaskan natives, native peoples of the Caribbean, native Hawaiians, and other native Pacific islanders.

NEPA process—the objective analysis of a proposed action to determine the degree of its environmental impact on the natural and physical environment; alternatives and mitigation that reduce that impact; and the full and candid presentation of analysis to, and involvement of, the interested and affected public. Required of federal agencies by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Organic Act (NPS)—the 1916 law (and subsequent amendments) that created the National Park Service and assigned it responsibility to manage the national parks.

Park—Any one of the hundreds of areas of land and water administered as part of the national park system. The term is used interchangeably in this document with "unit," "park unit," and "park area."

Sacred sites—certain natural and cultural resources treated by American Indian tribes and Alaska natives as sacred places having established religious meaning, and as locales of private ceremonial activities.

Stakeholder—an individual, group, or other entity that has a strong interest in decisions concerning park resources and values. Stakeholders may include, for example, recreational user groups, permittees, and concessioners. In the broadest sense, all Americans are stakeholders in the national parks.

Stewardship—the cultural and natural resource protection ethic of employing the most effective concepts, techniques, equipment, and technology to prevent, avoid, or mitigate impacts that would compromise the integrity of park resources.

Strategic plan—a Servicewide, 5-year plan required by GPRA (5 USC 306) in which the NPS states (1) how it plans to accomplish its mission during that time, and (2) the value it expects to produce for the tax dollars expended. Similarly, each park, program, or central office has its own strategic plan, which considers the Service-wide mission plus its own particular mission. Strategic plans serve as "performance agreements" with the American people.

Sustainable design—design that applies the principles of ecology, economics, and ethics to the business of creating necessary and appropriate places for people to visit, live, and work. Development that has been sustainably designed sits lightly upon the land, demonstrates resource efficiency, and promotes ecological restoration and integrity, thus improving the environment, the economy, and society.

Sustainable practices/ principles—those choices, decisions, actions and ethics that will best achieve ecological/ biological integ-

ity; protect qualities and functions of air, water, soil, and other aspects of the natural environment; and preserve human cultures. Sustainable practices allow for use and enjoyment by the current generation, while ensuring that future generations will have the same opportunities. See also, "environmental leadership" and "best management practices."

Traditional—pertains to recognizable, but not necessarily identical, cultural patterns transmitted by a group across at least two generations. Also applies to sites, structures, objects, landscapes, and natural resources associated with those patterns. Popular synonyms include "ancestral" and "customary."

Universal design—the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Value analysis/ value engineering—an organized, multi-disciplined team effort that analyzes the functions of facilities, processes, systems, equipment, services, and supplies for the purpose of achieving essential functions at the lowest life-cycle cost consistent with required performance, reliability, quality, and safety.

Visitor—defined as anyone who uses a park's interpretive and educational services, regardless of where such use occurs (e. g., via Internet access, library, etc.).

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework—a visitor carrying capacity planning process applied to determine the desired resource and visitor experience conditions, and used as an aid to decision-making.

Waiver (of policy)—an exemption from a particular policy provision. A waiver may be granted only by the Director of the National Park Service or a higher authority (e. g., the Secretary of the Interior).

Wilderness (area)—federal land that has been designated by Congress as a component of the national wilderness preservation system.

Types of Authorities

Sources of NPS Guidance

Constitution— the fundamental law of the United States.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)— a publication that codifies the general and permanent rules or regulations published in the Federal Register by the Executive branch departments and agencies of the federal government, and which carry the force of law. The citation 36 CFR 1.1 refers to part 1, section 1, of title 36.

Department of the Interior Manual (DM)— the compilation of policies, procedures, and guidelines governing operations of the various bureaus of the Department of the Interior.

Executive Orders, Memoranda, or Proclamations— regulations having the force of law issued by the President of the United States to the Executive branch of the federal government.

Federal Register— A daily publication of the National Archives and Records Administration that updates the Code of Federal Regulations, in which the public may review the regulations and legal notices issued by federal agencies. Source citations for the regulations are referred to by volume number and page number of the Federal Register and the date of publication (e. g., 65 FR 2984, January 19, 2000).

Public Law— A law or statute of the United States.

Regulations— Rules or orders prescribed by federal agencies to regulate conduct, and published in the CFR.

Treaties— A formal agreement between two or more nations in reference to peace, alliance, commerce, or other matters such as ocean, atmospheric, or living resources.

United States Code (USC)— The systematic collection of the existing laws of the United States, organized under 50 separate titles. The citation 16 USC 1 refers to section 1 of title 16.

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Front Cover Photos: (Top) Rocky Mountain National Park's Junior Ranger program is enhanced by sales items such as hats, patches, magnifying lenses, and rulers that are offered in the visitor center bookstore by the park's cooperating association. PHOTO NPS/MICHAEL LICHTER (Bottom Left) Effective and innovative outdoor media such as wayside exhibits at Timpanagos Cave National Monument help visitors understand park resources. NPS PHOTO (Bottom Center) Many national parks feature cultural demonstrations such as traditional basket weaving. NPS PHOTO (Bottom Right) Visitors to Fort Moultrie may encounter interpreters dressed in period clothing that make the Civil War era site come alive. NPS PHOTO


Back Cover Photos: (Bottom Left) Glacier National Park's widely celebrated red buses have been restored to operate on clean-running propane fuel. NPS PHOTO (Bottom Center) A park ranger guides visitors on a tour of Lincoln Home National Historic Site, which has been restored to its 1860s appearance. NPS PHOTO (Bottom Right) An interpretive ranger leads a school group on a journey of discovery in Canyonlands National Park. NPS PHOTO



National Park Service

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. We preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. We also cooperate with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.





*The National Park Service cares
for special places saved by the
American people so that all may
experience our heritage.*

An icon of the National Park Service and one of the world's most recognized landmarks, Old Faithful Geyser is visited by almost three million people on-site and more than 100 million people on-line worldwide each year.

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